VENTURES IN DRAMATICS

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VENTURES IN DRAMATICS

VENTURES IN DRAMATICS

WITH BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

BY

HULDA NIEBUHR

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1935

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DEDICATED TO
MY ERSTWHILE TEACHER

ALBERTA MUNKRES

AND TO MY CO-WORKERS
IN THE MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

In these accounts of ventures in dramatics with ten to fifteen year old church school pupils, the author seeks to make a contribution toward the needs of an age grade neglected in the published literature of religious education. These boys and girls are no longer served by that activity so interesting and useful in the younger grades, the so-called "spontaneous dramatics," where the audience is practically non-existent so far as both players and teachers are concerned, and they are not yet ready for the finished production of plays from the literature of the drama which engages the young people of the church.

The educational value of dramatic performances in the church school is, of course, more important than technical finish, but it may not be assumed that a certain degree of finish in performance need be a hindrance to the educational value of the activity, nor that sincerity is possible only if the plays are produced without an audience.

The plays and the more or less dramatic public programs planned and led by pupils which are reported in this book, were, almost without exception, brought to a finished performance. Indeed, their purpose was presentation before an audience. There seems to be justification for the belief that they were presented

with a requisite degree of sincerity and self-forgetfulness on the part of the producing groups. When such results were lacking, or lacking in any degree, the reasons could be noted and the difficulties overcome in subsequent endeavors.

Any one who knows growing boys and girls is quite well aware that there is a natural inclination for all sorts of "spontaneous" expression, and that opportunity for it is taken if not given. But these children expect more of the church school than opportunity for spontaneous activity. In the pre-adolescent and early adolescent age they want to exercise their growing powers in achievements which they, and their comrades, can respect. They want activities in which self-respect, poise and independence can develop, as they feel themselves effective in their group enterprises and respected by their fellows for the part they can take in activities meaningful to them all.

These children do not want merely to be active. They want activity which makes a difference, which has purpose and end. They do not want merely to express themselves, but they want to express themselves adequately to a listening group.

Drama offers a medium of expression almost universally enjoyable. There is no one of any age grade among the youth in the church school who does not like to "be in a play," provided the subject matter is interesting to him and the standard of production

merits his respect, except it be the occasional sufferer from undue shyness. Even such an individual may enjoy having some one overrule his self-consciousness and urge him into a role within his powers. (There comes to mind exceedingly shy Annie, who took part in the first play reported in this collection. The leader of the group had quietly induced her to sit as member in the "African congregation" in the last scene of the play, a part which did not call for a word to say. Annie was a happy little girl in the role, which, without demanding too much, impelled her to forget herself in the group enterprise.)

Make-believe exerts its magic charm in all ages. The social aspects of the dramatic art give it a special appeal to children in these years of quickly developing social instincts and aptitudes. However, it is not just any make-believe but make-believe as a demanding art form which calls forth their sustained interest.

These growing boys and girls, with progressive experience in dramatics, learn to respect the definite requirements of the dramatic form and know that it may not be prostituted by calling any costumed conversation a play. They enjoy a growing discrimination and skill in its use as playwrights and as players, and an increasingly intelligent appreciation as audience. Effective leadership is therefore a prerequisite to an abiding and developing interest in drama on their part. Sloppy and ineffective performances tend to de-

grade in their minds the realities to which they are trying to give expression.

Their growing social sense makes responsibility to an audience a definite impetus to excellence in conception and performance. Therefore most of the enterprises in dramatics reported in this book had their inception in the share of responsibility carried by the Juniors and Intermediates for their joint worship service each Sunday morning before classtime in the church auditorium (and in the common tasks undertaken by the members of that congregation, which made them a receptive and inspiring audience). There is no question, as the reports show, that responsibility to the audience was a determining stimulus to production, and impetus to sustained and concentrated effort.

It must be acknowledged that public performances tempt to self-consciousness and insincerity, jealousy, rivalry and selfishness. They can be occasions for the enhancement of bad personality traits and of bad patterns of group behavior in a degree not possible in classroom dramatizations, for the informal presentation cannot fire the personal ambition of players and leaders as does the public performance. Insincere performances are not a judgment upon this type of dramatics, however, but rather upon the leadership.

One of the greatest values of dramatic group enterprises, when they engage the interest of the participants

at all, is that they bring into focus and give opportunity to solve, all sorts of problems of interrelationship, of honesty of workmanship and thought, of differences in taste and judgment. One test of the reality of any school experience is the degree to which it gives occasion for the thoughts and attitudes of pupils to express themselves openly and fully. It is the function of leadership to make the situations which are so called forth contribute to the development of the pupils.

The reality and honesty of group activity are always endangered to whatever degree the leadership lacks insight to perceive problems objectively, or courage to deal with them fairly, or real regard for the welfare of all the pupils, or honest respect for their thinking and ability to guide it.

The majority of children consciously or unconsciously recognize as the haven of their desire a group atmosphere in which it is assumed that all members work for the best of the whole. They are more than ready to bring forth their honest thought and work on problems within their range if their thought is stimulated and desired and respected. They enjoy the opportunity to forget themselves for the sake of the whole. When tangles arise they appreciate nothing more, eventually if not immediately, than to be made to look at their problems squarely and to solve them without evasion.

In almost all groups, however, there are some pupils whose exaggerated need for attention will tempt them

to impose themselves upon their circle if thoughtful leadership does not restrain them. It is the attitude of these pupils which causes many leaders to say that in dramatics casting for public performances is always a grievous problem and "spoils group spirit." Yet these children must be dealt with educationally, and the drama offers opportunity to help them. For some reason they have less confidence in life and in themselves than is healthful. Sometimes a play will give the experience needful to bring to them the realization that they have their own place in the group, but often the denial of ambitious desires is necessary. A leader who has the courage to restrain the ambitions of such pupils for their own and the group's good, and possesses at the same time sufficient sympathy and understanding to preserve their feeling of security with him, will make such experiences yield benefit to them. The group spirit will be enhanced and perfected by leadership which keeps decisions on an objective basis.

The ambitious fathers and mothers and aunts and uncles of spoiled children are not apt to come into the picture when the leadership assumes as a matter of course that one does not develop star players in church school dramatics, that choice of cast is determined on some basis accepted as fair by the group as a whole.

And it should always be taken for granted that the names of players are not publicized. Programs tell about a play only that which is important for the un-

derstanding of the action. Who the players are is quite beside the point. They are where they are in order that they may represent their class and lead the congregation in worship. Perhaps the scene shifter is the chief playwright, who knows? and the king's guard without a line to speak the real leader of the group? The thing that is important is that the players truly lead the congregation in thought and worship.

Ill-advised emphasis upon verisimilitude in make-up or setting causes self-consciousness. It is a constant question of taste and judgment at what point imagination is hindered rather than helped by use of costuming, make-up and properties. If one in the role of Abraham wears the striped tunic associated with that character, it helps the imagination of audience and player. But if a twelve year old boy is permitted, even enjoined, to wear the long beard also associated with that character, the beard will so much intrude upon his consciousness that he will feel "cute." The audience will see a young boy dressed up, not Abraham, and will rightly judge his playing insincere, if the absurdity will let them listen seriously enough to think so far.

It may well be, even when pupils have written a play themselves and feel it as their own completely, that they play self-consciously because preparation for production has been inadequate, because rehearsals have been few or have lacked thoroughness. If the players have not the confidence which comes with careful and

thoroughgoing preparation, the normal awareness of the audience becomes suffused with undue apprehension. Play production normally calls forth and gives opportunity to develop pertinacity in bringing work begun to a good conclusion. Again it is the function of leadership to see that this asset of dramatic enterprise is exploited.

Sometimes children play insincerely because they have been asked to "put on" a play which represents experience they cannot imagine vividly enough, which cannot have meaning or significance to them. If they are merely saying words, going through drilled actions, of course they cannot forget themselves, particularly since in such cases the motives to which appeal is made are likely to be self-regarding ones.

We have been speaking of dangers to sincerity in dramatic productions. We may need to remind ourselves that we cannot bring about sincere expression merely by trying to keep children from insincerity. Pupils must be helped to experiences about which they can be enthusiastically sincere—to strong interests, real adventures in living and thinking, interpretations of their life which illuminate it for them.

The fear of modern young teachers that they may call forth insincerity by imposing their own interests and convictions upon their pupils often has the very negative result of consigning children to meagerness of outlook and shallowness of experience, of confining

them to their own immediate experiences and insights. A religious education curriculum for growing youth must be rooted in firm convictions and deep personal experience on the teacher's part, and through his appreciation and knowledge of it, in the religious heritage of the race. And it must be broadly based in the present experience of city, nation, race, in joy in discovery of new truth, of old truth applied to new situations.

Realities can always be made to be experienced as real and interesting, but hard work and devoted thinking is required in relation to the pupils on the part of the teacher. Some of the teachers whose work is reported in the following pages might conceivably have reported quite truthfully, "my children are not interested" in stars, in King David, in the education of Negro youth, in a memorial to a departed teacher, and if the teachers had let it go at that the children would have been deprived of experiences which became deeply interesting to them. As it was, the pupils were led step by step to wider appreciations. But these advances in understanding took much preparation, much time and thought on a leader's part—whole books read, visits of research made, courses taken, children's thinking explored.

A teacher who is willing to put himself thoroughly into the service of his group will find ever widening and deepening resources at his disposal, as God's strength is made perfect in his own weakness.

It may be pointed out that sincerity of expression does not depend merely upon intellectual apprehension. It is the advantage of an art form, as drama, that it can suggest feelings, moods, attitudes, aspirations and apprehensions which the children, all of us in some measure, are not ready to articulate but can recognize and share. There is a place, quite decidedly therefore, in the education in religion, for productions using poetic expression of the past and of the present, the content of which children cannot thoroughly realize, granted they do feel the mood and sense the significance. (See, for instance, "Building the Temple," "The Secret of the Stars," "No Feelings Hurt.")

In the following chapters the author seeks to recreate experiences in the church school, in Sunday and weekday groups, where dramatic presentations have been outgrowth and occasion of interested learning. They are not offered as perfect patterns of procedure which they cannot presume to be.

The reports do not represent complete "case studies" of each enterprise. The account of recurring details of inception, next steps, costuming, casting, of all the problems which arose and their solution, would have been wearisome. In each chapter those aspects have been emphasized which made the enterprise memorable to the author, or which seemed to reflect learning experiences sufficiently representative to be worth recording. Effort has been made to effect some balance in

emphases, and while the book does not presume to represent a systematic treatise on creative dramatics for ten to fifteen year olds, it does attempt in some chapter or other to dwell on each principle that seems to the author important in such group work.

The present volume is a social product in much more than the ordinary sense. Very obviously, quite a number of children and their teachers were co-authors. The Intermediate and Junior choirs and their leader, Horace M. Hollister; the "costume lady," Harriet M. Andrus; the leader of the Junior Department, Ethel Stewart; the minister responsible for the educational program of the church, Philip C. Jones, were co-producers of many of the programs reported and actively interested in them all.

VENTURES IN DRAMATICS

I

BUNGA

"Rethinking Missions" by a group of ten-year-olds.

THERE was more excitement in the air than is usual even when a play is to be given, for this play was a surprise, planned by the cast of ten-year-olds and their leader.

Mr. Ita, young native African, had been "roving teacher" in the church school while in this country studying. Lovable and gifted, and most adaptable, he had been a very acceptable substitute teacher for all ages. It may be mentioned that a few pupils had objected at first to having beside them in their church school class a man so black. His dignity and charm disarmed them quickly and they became very good friends.

All the pupils knew him and enjoyed his stories of African life. The Junior girls' weekday group knew him especially well and were very devoted to him. To every one's disappointment he found he needed to return to Africa several months sooner than he had planned originally.

What might the pupils do that would make the occasion of the last worship service he would attend meaningful to them and to him? The story of Bunga*[1] was called to mind. Because of the interest in Africa, aroused by Mr. Ita's presence in the school, that story, among a number of stories of African life, had been used in several groups. It told of a little African girl, who gave away her most prized possession in order that she might thereby help secure a teacher for her neighborhood.

In the Junior girls' weekday group the pupils had played at dramatizing the story. One or two who were specially interested had thought further about it at home and had brought in writing their suggestions for several scenes. Nothing was done at the time about making a finished play out of the experience. Now those who had been most interested in that original informal dramatization were called to meet with their leader that they might discuss the possibilities of making that play a feature of Mr. Ita's farewell service.

There was no dearth of suggestions: "Could Mr. Ita be the teacher in the story?" "Yes, let's have him be the teacher!" "Couldn't we have the play a surprise for Mr. Ita?" That suggestion was still more acceptable and met unanimous assent: "Let's make it a surprise for Mr. Ita!" "He said he was going to train teachers for his people, that's what he cares most about,

* A small superior figure indicates Notes to be found on p. 223.

so there can be more schools. We can put in a teacher he trained instead of him." And that is what was done.

The original story had depicted little Bunga as giving up her most treasured possession in order that a white teacher might be sent to her country. In the made-over play her dream is realized because Mr. Ita returns to Africa to help native young people prepare themselves for the work of teachers.

In the informal dramatization the pupils with their leader had decided upon four happenings in the story on which the scenes of the play should be based. Now they wrote and re-wrote the dialogue, discussed and played the four scenes over and again until the total seemed satisfactory as a well-knit whole.

"Couldn't the town in the play be a real town that Mr. Ita really knows?" With suppressed excitement, for the surprise must remain a surprise, Mr. Ita was interviewed for a list of the names of towns near his home. "Oyo" was chosen as the name that "sounds nicest" and was "easiest for us to say." So the town of Oyo became the setting of the story but the church chancel, just as it always looks, was the scene of the play. Simulating an African landscape would have meant simulating the appearance of African people. And blackened faces, the children saw readily, would have made a farce of the play. So, quite simply and naturally the characters were African because for the time being they felt African.

The program announced:

A Play: BUNGA'S GIFT.

> Characters in order of appearance: BUNGA, a little African girl; an American trader; the high man of the village; Bunga's mother; a native pastor; some members of the congregation in Oyo.
>
> Scene I: Under a tree by a roadside in Nigeria.
> Scene II: In the trader's tent at the end of a day's journey.
> Scene III: Upon arrival at the town of Oyo.
> Scene IV: During Sunday morning service in the Christian church at Oyo.

The stage properties were simple and few. There was a bag, woven of African grasses, recently received from Africa by one of the members of the church and now worn slung over the plaid gingham of the "American trader" so that "he" might draw from it at the proper time the beads he exchanges for Bunga's dog-tooth chain (some white bone beads). There was also a piece of colorful hand-woven cloth, and of course, the string of shining beads of crystal which are so important in the story—understandably so, for what little girl would not have enjoyed their sparkle? (In the performance little Bunga's exclamation over the string of beads at the end of the second scene "I have never

seen anything so lovely" was an exclamation of such real delight that it could not have been difficult for even the boys and men in the audience to share readily in the excitement of that possession.)

Somewhat as follows the play proceeded, with Mr. Ita, who had assisted in leading the worship service, sitting behind the players, in the guest chair in the chancel, his manifest interest, and the interest of players and audience in him, very much a part of the experience.

BUNGA'S GIFT

SCENE I

Under a tree by a roadside in Nigeria

BUNGA: [*Enters from rear left, stops at center, looks toward right.*] He's coming! He's coming! I must run home and tell Mother. [*She runs to right and calls, as if into hut.*] Mother! Mother! The white man is coming! [*To herself.*] I wonder if it is a teacher!

TRADER: [*Enters rear right, steps up to* BUNGA.] Do you know where the High Man of the village lives?

BUNGA: Yes, I will find him.

TRADER: I need some helpers. My servants are sick and can go no farther and I must get my goods to the beach in time to sail on the next boat. [BUNGA *exit left.*] I know how difficult it is in this season when

so much shipping is going on to get helpers. The men in this village may all be gone. I hope not.

[HIGH MAN *and* BUNGA *enter from left.*]

HIGH MAN: Bunga has told me your request. I do not know of a man in the village just now who could help you. Perhaps the women could do the work.

TRADER: That is all right. I'd be glad to have the women do it.

BUNGA: I'm sure that my mother and some of the other women of the village would work for you. I could help, too. Oh, here comes mother now. [*Hurries to meet* MOTHER *coming from front right.*] Can't we go with the Trader to the beach, Mother? His helpers are sick and he needs to have his goods carried to the boat.

MOTHER: Yes, of course, we will help him, Bunga. [*To the* TRADER *and the* HIGH MAN.] The journey to the beach is three days, and three days from now will be God's day. We will help the white man but he must not make us work on God's day.

TRADER: [*Figuring possibilities.*] Yes, three days from now will be Sunday. We can stop and rest on that day and make the boat too. On Sunday you can attend the meeting which will be held in the little church at Oyo.

HIGH MAN: I shall be glad to let the women go with you. [*Exit right.*]

MOTHER: We will go and get some of the other women. You will need quite a number, for all your baggage, but I feel certain we can get enough helpers.

TRADER: I thank you very much! [TRADER *exit right,* BUNGA *and her* MOTHER *left.*]

SCENE II

In the Trader's tent at the end of a day's journey

[TRADER *comes to center front from rear right.* BUNGA, *entering from rear left, comes peering at the* TRADER *with curious eyes.*]

TRADER: Come in, don't be afraid. I have a little girl at home in America just about your age. What an interesting necklace you have on! Dog's teeth, isn't it? How happy my little girl in America would be to have a necklace like that!

BUNGA: Many little girls in Africa wear necklaces made of dog's teeth to keep away the evil spirits.

TRADER: Would you like to exchange this necklace for the one that you have on? [TRADER *extends long, very shining string of crystal beads.*]

BUNGA: That for me? For me? [*She quickly takes off her own necklace and thrusts it into the white man's hands and takes the crystal beads and plays them in the sunlight.*] I have never seen anything so lovely! Thank you so much. I want to run and show it to my mother! [*Runs off rear right,* TRADER *exit rear left.*]

SCENE III

Upon arrival at the town of Oyo

MOTHER: [*Enters with Bunga from rear left, walking wearily.*] Here we are, at last. It was a long weary journey. [*To* BUNGA, *who is fingering her beads.*] You do love your beads, don't you?

BUNGA: Yes, every time I thought I could go no further I looked at these lovely sparkling beads. They made

me feel better. [*Laughs happily.*] Funny, but that's how it was.

MOTHER: This is the town where the little Christian church is that I had always hoped to see. You know it is the town where the Christian teacher came from who visited us every year and taught us. They say he died. No one has taken his place.

BUNGA: This is where you said you wanted me to go to school some day. I do *so* hope I can go to school for a little while anyway! [*Sadly.*] But now there is no teacher.

MOTHER: I have not given up hope that my dream will come true—that some time you will have a chance to go to school—that some time there will be a teacher. [*Both exit front left.*]

SCENE IV

During Sunday morning service in the Christian church at Oyo

[*The* MINISTER *enters from rear right, stands at center of chancel, the congregation, having come from front right and left, are seated on the chancel steps.*]

MINISTER: Ever since the American teacher died we have had no teacher here. Now that Eyo Ita is back from America we can hope again to open a school. He is training teachers of our own race to be the teachers of our children. One of our own Nigerian young people could come from Eyo Ita's school if we guarantee his expenses. The offering today is for that purpose. [MINISTER *holds offering basket as he stands center of chancel. First of group from chancel steps*

to come forward is BUNGA'S MOTHER *offering a piece of cloth.*]

BUNGA: [*To herself, as she rises excitedly.*] Mother is so anxious for a teacher that she is giving the beautiful cloth for her new dress. How I wish that I might give something to make it possible to have a teacher. [*She catches hand in necklace.*] Oh, but it is the most beautiful thing that I have. No—I can't give that away for I cherish it so. [*Sits down again. Others of congregation go forward giving eggs, cloth, fruit.* BUNGA *rises again after a pause.*] Will it be the beads or the teacher? [*She starts to go, hesitates, looks at her beads, fingers them, then goes forward resolutely and lays them in the basket. Several others come forward with offerings and take seats again.*]

MINISTER: [*Dedicating the offering.*] Heavenly Father, we dedicate these gifts to thy service. We thank thee for the leader who was willing to take a long, long journey and give work and thought in order that he might learn more to teach our people. We thank thee for teachers. Amen.

MINISTER: [*To the congregation.*] The gifts have been generous. When I exchange these gifts for money at the trading station I feel certain there will be enough for Eyo Ita to send us a teacher. [*Congregation and* MINISTER *depart.* BUNGA *and her* MOTHER *linger.*]

BUNGA: [*To her* MOTHER, *eagerly, as they leave toward front right.*] Now I can go to school. We'll have a teacher! We'll have a teacher! Eyo Ita will send us a teacher!

MOTHER: [*Patting* BUNGA'S *shoulder.*] We shall have a teacher!

The audience seemed to share the joy in the mother's quiet words, and in little Bunga's face and her excited clear young voice as she said, "We'll have a teacher! We'll have a teacher! Eyo Ita will send us a teacher!"

Mr. Ita was obviously happy and moved to have the young pupils portray his purpose and the need and hunger of his people for the service he would try to give. The players were thoroughly satisfied with his pleasure in the surprise. "Did you see how he laughed and was surprised when the trader said, 'We'll go to church in Oyo'? Then he knew why we asked him all those town names!"

Several days later the weekday group of which the players were members gave Mr. Ita a farewell party. They thought of themselves as patrons of his enterprise and felt that they were sending him as their own special ambassador to Africa.

NOTE: Costumes are an important and interesting factor in dramatics because they help so much to create and to sustain illusion and because children like so much to "dress up," but they are not at all indispensable, as the foregoing shows. And the truth of the contention, often made, that older pupils need at all events a growing verisimilitude in the setting and costumes, may well be questioned. The audience in this case, as in the case of other plays as simply presented, consisted of several hundred pupils ranging in age from nine to fifteen and sixteen. It happened it was some of the older boys who said after the foregoing play: "That was one of the nicest things we ever did." There had been nothing but the note on the program to indicate that the first scene was under a tree, the second in a tent, the last in a church. And the "white trader" and the "village high man" had been dressed exactly alike, as the little American twin sisters they really were.

II

BESTOWERS AND RECEIVERS

A club ceremonial formulates the boys' code of action.

In the previous year, when they were still Juniors, these first-year Intermediate boys had dramatized Raymond MacDonald Alden's story, "The Knights of the Silver Shield,"[2] as one of their weekday enterprises. The production of that play had been possibly the most memorable activity of their year, the making of the silver shields not the least absorbing aspect of the activity.

Subsequently they had adopted the name "Knights of the Silver Shield" for their group, feeling much more important if not much more knightly for it. There seemed to be some point in testing the boys' concept of knighthood, perhaps to deepen the content, to give it heightened sincerity and meaning, to use it, possibly, toward the formulation of a code of action. There was decidedly some point, at the first of the new year under new leadership, for an activity which would call their forces together, therefore it was proposed that the boys give a party to the Junior weekday group from which

they had graduated. As always, any suggestion which included a party was accepted with enthusiasm.

"You called yourselves 'Knights of the Silver Shield.' How about handing that name down to the new Junior Club to keep as long as they want? You might work out a ceremonial handing over your shields, telling what they stand for," suggested the leader of the Intermediate Department.

Working out a ceremonial, being paternal to the Juniors, resurrecting the shields—that was good fun! In the list of committees for the party—invitation, refreshment, entertainment—was included a ceremonial committee.

When the ceremonial committee met there was first of all review of the meaning of knighthood in its historic aspects and then discussion of its meaning here and now. The play was recalled, of Sir Roland, who, like all the knights in the story, wished that his silver shield might show the star of the perfect knight—Sir Roland who was ordered by the commander to guard the castle gate while the other knights went forth with him to fight the giants. Every temptation offered by cleverly disguised enemies to abandon the seemingly unimportant post at the gate for the more coveted place in battle was resisted by Sir Roland. Finally the knights came home, after successful battle, to find it is Sir Roland whose silver shield showed the star, evidence of most difficult duty faithfully performed.

"What are the shields to stand for in the ceremonial?" asked the leader. And then began a lively discussion as that ceremonial was concocted by five very active twelve-year-olds, hanging over the leader's shoulders and her typewriter as corporately they dictated the text.

There had to be much stopping to clarify terms, for the abstract general concepts in which the boys indulged fondly might have been vague wasteful words. If the words stood clearly for specific types of conduct, had now a definite meaning which might keep growing in real significance, then they could be an asset in the boys' vocabularies—else they might be mere cant and pious humbug.

"One of the shields must stand for faithfulness, doing what you promised to do," that was unanimous. And when it came to defining what faithfulness in the boys' own lives might mean, that was not difficult.

"Courage" followed easily, "sportsmanship," "friendliness," "not being lazy," for which negative concept the leader gave them the positive "diligence," an expression new to them and *"some* big word," but gladly accepted and proudly used.

The inclination to be high and mighty in the admonitions accompanying the presentation of each shield was very strong. "You ought to," "we hope you will," "this means that it will be your duty," were, at the beginning, characteristic opening phrases, followed

by sentences very "preachy"—who knows whether it was because they liked "moralizing" or because they were unconsciously echoing what they had heard at home and in school?

The leader's reminder that not even the minister in the pulpit, much older than they, would presume to say to them in his sermons, "you should," rather than admonish himself with them, "we will," and the poser, "Have you done all these things so well that you have a right to *command* others to do them?" brought the concession from four of the committee of five: "We don't stop working at being knights, we just give them a chance to know about it too." One of the group liked "the other way best" but the majority overruled him. Very simple presentation speeches, however not at all free from admonition, a noticeable flavor of which would not seem altogether out of place in this type of program, were written and accepted as "O.K."

An explanatory opening was composed, and a "knight's vow" for the closing. The next step was the planning of exact procedure. "When the president has made his opening speech, the other knights need to rise, and won't he have to say or do something so that the Juniors will know they are expected to stand?" queried the leader. "Let's have him say, Bestowers and receivers, please stand!" was the quick proposal of one of the boys, and that was just grandiloquent enough to meet the very ready approval of all the group.

Parts were assigned, a rehearsal held, memorization promised. The total plan for the ceremonial stood as follows:

A KNIGHTS' CEREMONIAL

CLUB PRESIDENT: There were knights in the olden time who were known as the Knights of the Silver Shield. When we were the Junior Boys' Club, which you are now, we learned a story which we made into a play, and it told about these knights. The story said that the knights' shields stayed bright and shining when they lived up to their best. When they forgot to be true knights the shields became cloudy.

You are now the Junior Club and we have the honor to bestow upon you the silver shields which stand for the honor of the knights. Bestowers and Receivers, please stand!

[*Five "Knights" with shields stand in row facing audience. Five "Junior" boys rise to stand opposite the knights, each to receive a shield in turn.*]

FIRST KNIGHT: This shield stands for friendliness. It becomes cloudy when one does not act in a friendly way to new members of the club, to old friends, to people of other races, to people in need. In accepting it you promise to be friendly. I bestow upon you the shield of friendliness.

SECOND KNIGHT: This shield stands for diligence. It becomes cloudy when you are lazy, if you should not finish, in club or elsewhere, some work which you have started to do. In taking this shield you promise to live up to it. I bestow upon you the shield of diligence.

THIRD KNIGHT: This shield stands for courage. We expect you to be brave if you accept the honor of carrying this shield. It means you will not run away when there is something hard to do. I bestow upon you the shield of courage.

FOURTH KNIGHT: This shield stands for sportsmanship. In offering you this shield we expect you to be fair in your play and to be good losers, as we, too, will try to be fair in our play and to be good losers. I bestow upon you the shield of good sportsmanship.

FIFTH KNIGHT: This shield stands for faithfulness. It will stay bright only if the club is faithful, if the members do what they promise in their committee work and in obeying all the laws of the knights of the silver shield. I bestow upon you the shield of faithfulness.

LEADER: Do you promise for your club that you will honor these shields?

JUNIORS: [*In unison.*] We do.

LEADER: In your turn, will you hand over these shields to the Juniors who follow you, and teach them to honor the purposes of the Knights of the Silver Shield?

JUNIORS: We will.

LEADER: As you depart with the shields, remember to keep them bright.

The "party" began by ushering all the Junior Club into the chapel. A song of knighthood, and a story of knighthood by the specially invited minister opened the program. Then came the ceremonial. It had been memorized carefully by all. The shields were bestowed with such solemn dignity that the Juniors were evidently greatly impressed, and the first year Interme-

diates no less themselves. The boys left the chapel with the solemnity of the occasion still upon them, a solemnity very quickly dispelled on the way to the "gym" where the entertainment committee's program of games began in short order, the very interesting refreshments not long in abeyance.

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III

DAVID AND HIS THREE MIGHTY MEN

Imagination is kindled by knowledge. Bible backgrounds must be studied thoroughly if pupils are to see Bible characters as real people in real situations.

THEY did not want to study the Bible this year, they said, these twelve to thirteen year old boys, just promoted to the Intermediate Department. It was "kid stuff" in the opinion of several of the more outspoken boys in the group, and the others agreed with them that it was "kid stuff" and they wanted none of it.

"If you think that, you surely can't know *David,"* retorted their young teacher. He had played the part of David in a drama staged by the young people recently, had immersed himself in the character and story and time of the shepherd king of Israel; therefore David was the Bible hero who came to his mind quickly and vividly.

"Being a shepherd is a soft life," thought the boys, more or less conscious perhaps of the fact that it was in their so *very* long ago Primary days when they had

learned the Shepherd Psalm and had pasted pictures of loving shepherds.

"If you can think *that,*" said the teacher, "you cannot have studied what shepherd life in Judea really is like." He sketched to the boys the picture of the Judean shepherd fighting lions, rolling boulders before caves lest wild beasts come forth, pouring hot oil into snake holes. . . . It sounded adventuresome and heroic enough to give it a trial. One of the boys undertook to stop at the church school library to take home for study *The Song of Our Syrian Guest,*[3] so that he might make report the following Sunday on an Eastern shepherd's personal account of shepherding.

The teacher reviewed for the next session some reading that had given him appreciation of David's early life:

> "Judea offers as good ground as there is in all the East for observing the shepherd's character. On the boundless Eastern pasture, so different from the narrow meadows and diked hillsides with which we are familiar, the shepherd is indispensable. With us, sheep are often left to themselves; but I do not remember ever to have seen in the East a flock of sheep without a shepherd. In such a landscape as Judea, where a day's pasture is thinly scattered over an unfenced tract of country, covered with delusive paths, still frequented by wild beasts, and rolling off into the desert, the man and his character are indispensable. On some high moor, across which at night the hy-

enas howl, when you meet him sleepless, farsighted, weatherbeaten, armed, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judea sprang to the front of his peoples' history; why they gave his name to their king, and made him the symbol of Providence, why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice."[4]

With this understanding as basis and setting, the story of "David the Shepherd Lad" as told by the teacher, was accepted by the boys at the next meeting of the class as the story of a real hero. Apparently they had forgotten their ban on Bible stories. On the impetus of its success the teacher took the class on the following Sundays into the swift-moving adventurous world of the young man David who slew the giant, who captained to victory a motley "gang" of 400, who made sweet music on the harp to soothe the evil spirit which tormented the king, whom Jonathan loved as his own soul, who became Israel's greatest king. The boys saw him as one who sinned grievously but who repented in deep contrition for sins other kings of his day considered a king's prerogative. They saw him as one who may be remembered for his tender loyalties.

Perhaps the boys appreciated to some degree, if not yet deeply, the loyalty to God which animated all David's other devotions, but they appreciated very evidently his loyalty to friends and followers, to the king

who had outraged him, to the son who had rebelled against him, his loyalty to the memory of his friend Jonathan.

When by way of review the class scanned again the life of David to decide upon their favorite episode, the story they would like most to present in dramatic form, they chose "David and His Three Mighty Men," as they liked to title the story of David and the three friends who brought him the coveted water from the well of Bethlehem.

The flourish in the language and action of the simple play which they wrote, and presented in the boys' and girls' worship service, had quite something of the flavor of the tales of King Arthur and of Robin Hood, perhaps evidence of the fact that David had become real to them.

"David" and his "three mighty men," with spears and shields, and helmets, and colorful garments,[5] were no taller than most twelve-year-olds, shorter it happened than many. It is possible that a few sophisticated grown-ups whose eyes were holden did not see them as mighty men. Very evidently the players, and their fellow students who conducted the service, were experiencing the mighty friendship of the "mighty men" and David's loyalty to them as anything but "kid-stuff."

By their own choice the boys studied after this the characters of the disciples in so far as they are known. They were interested in knowing "Jesus' friends."

DAVID AND HIS THREE MIGHTY MEN

SCENE I

The Cave of Adullam

[*A shield and spear in prominent place indicate the setting.*]

DAVID: [*Enters from right in attitude of deep thought.*] The Philistines are but a few miles away. [*He looks up and then goes to the entrance of the cave.*] It is growing late. I wonder why Shammah, Nathan, and Reuben have not come to talk with me about a plan of attack. [*Comes back and sits down.*] With Shammah, Nathan, and Reuben at my side I cannot help but win the battle. They are my bravest soldiers. Well do I remember how each, singlehanded, defended Israel from many hundred Philistines! They are truly mighty men.—But they are more; they are my friends. Were it not for this friendship I could not succeed.

[*A soldier runs in, very much out of breath. He kneels in homage to* DAVID.]

MESSENGER: Sire, the Philistines——

DAVID: [*Eagerly.*] Yes?

MESSENGER: The Philistines have taken Bethlehem and are garrisoned there with a thousand men!

DAVID: Go immediately and find Shammah, Nathan, and Reuben and send them here.

MESSENGER: Yes, Sire. [*Runs out.*]

DAVID: The Philistines in Bethlehem! I cannot bear the thought. What will they do to my father's house and

our good neighbors? And the white sheepfold where I spent many happy hours with my sheep? [*Three soldiers have entered, but stand at side quietly, not wishing to interrupt* DAVID'S *thoughts.*] But most of all do I remember the well at the gate. All the shepherds used to gather there and talk while the sheep drank the cooling water. Water like that I have never anywhere found. I would give much for a cup of it now. [*Pause.*] But I must get ready for the battle.

[*He leaves without seeing the soldiers. The three mighty men come forward softly. They talk excitedly.*]

SHAMMAH: You heard what our captain said! He longs for a cup of water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem.

NATHAN: I understand. David's wish is our command. Our duty is before us!

REUBEN: But there will be many sentries. The messenger said three hundred men were camped outside the walls and around the gate!

SHAMMAH: What of that? Did you not slay eight hundred that day in Ezna? Remember it is for David.

REUBEN: You are right. For our leader and beloved friend even our lives are a poor sacrifice.

NATHAN: Then we are resolved. We are three against three hundred but we will return with the water. [*They clasp hands and go.*]

SCENE II

The cave an hour later. DAVID, *ready for battle, is pacing up and down waiting for his captains. Sud-*

denly they enter. They look weary. Their clothes are torn as from battle. They speak almost in gasps. SHAMMAH *is carrying a cup with a little water in it.*

SHAMMAH: [*Kneeling.*] Sire, the water——

DAVID: The water? What water?

REUBEN: From the well at the gate of Bethlehem.

NATHAN: We overheard your wish. We fought our way through the Philistines and came to the well. We each dipped our cups while the other two watched. Then we escaped in the darkness. I fear much was spilled.

SHAMMAH: But there is enough to quench your thirst.

DAVID: My brave and loyal soldiers. You have already proved your love by many deeds of bravery. But now you are more than loyal soldiers. You are my brothers.—And this water. I could not drink it now. For it is no longer water, but the symbol of your love. You have jeopardized your lives for me. I am not worthy to receive such sacrifice. But I will pour it out as a praise offering to Jehovah our Lord.

SHAMMAH, REUBEN, *and* NATHAN: As you will. They each drop on knee and bow the head.

DAVID: [*While pouring the water as libation.*] Father, hear Thy servant as he gives to Thee this offering of love and sacrifice. Amen. [*After brief pause.*] Let us go now and sound the call to battle.

[*Exit, followed by the three soldiers.*]

IV

"SING WE HOSANNA!"

A Palm Sunday playlet in which the whole congregation took part.

THE children crying in the temple . . . Hosanna to the son of David" . . . remembrance of that reference in the Palm Sunday story by the leader was the clue to a unit of New Testament study in a weekday group of ten and eleven year old boys and girls.

"Why would the children sing praise to Jesus?" she asked. "It might have been some of them had a father that was a leper, and they were glad Jesus made him well!" "It might be the blind man was their uncle and they were glad he could see now."

Lest the pupils think of Jesus pre-eminently as a worker of miracles the teacher took occasion to explain the distressful times in which Jesus lived, and that there were no hospitals and clinics then, that any one who cared for people as much as he did would surely do all he could to help them, and that any one in whom God's spirit was so strong must give many discouraged people new hope. He did not "work magic" but he used the power that was in him to

strengthen the faith in life that was in people, and so he made many well.

References in his story were looked up. "Thy faith hath made thee whole," "According to your faith be it unto you," "Jesus seeing their faith" was found to be the refrain in the healing stories.

Therewith the leader let a series of stereopticon slides review for her group many of the stories of Jesus. There was the healing of Bartimeus, to be sure, but also Jesus' observation of the widow putting her mite into the offering box in the temple. There was the familiar "Jesus blessing the children," the pupils looking up the appropriate reference and the leader re-telling the story of the lamb that was lost, to make more vivid the pupils' realization of Jesus as fascinating teller of stories. There was the friendly visit with Martha and Mary and Lazarus, the story of Zacchaeus and the difficult test Jesus gave him, the calling of the disciples to leave all and follow him, and finally the entry into Jerusalem with the throng going to the Passover.

"Did everybody have to go to Jerusalem at Passover?" some one asked. One of the pupils offered to bring to the next meeting a book from home which told all about the reason why the people went to celebrate the Passover. Her report opened the next session. Whole families would go, she said among other things, the children banding together during the day to return to the family fold in the evening.

"How would it be," the leader proposed, "if all of you here would pretend you are children who hope to meet Jesus as you journey to the Passover in Jerusalem —not just children themselves old enough to attend the Passover, but children living in villages near Jerusalem who knew of Jesus? Palm Sunday is coming in a few weeks. Perhaps we could write a play for that day. We could play we are the children who sang Hosanna to him."

"Let's have a family start at their house and other children come and they all say they want to meet Jesus!" suggested one of the group. It seemed to be taken for granted they would like to write the play.

"Suppose then you are the children living near Jerusalem who know Jesus is going to the Passover feast. Why do you want to see Jesus?" asked the leader.

Jesus' understanding of the mother who had so little money to give seemed to have special appeal to these children of very small means. At any rate, several responded with: "I want to see Jesus because he was kind to my mother in the temple." "Because he healed my uncle Bartimeus" was another favorite reason, perhaps because a blind story-teller had entertained the children in their group not so long before, and blind people were on their minds. "We ought to put Zacchaeus in the play because he climbed a tree to see Jesus on the road near where we pretend the children are."

For half an hour or more various groups of pupils

took turn at playing "the family" and "the other children," experimenting with the situations and the conversation they had planned tentatively.

For the next meeting several pupils promised to bring "a play" based on their plans that day. One of these "plays" came written in narrative form:

"It is the home of two children, their mother and father. It was after the evening meal when a messenger knocked at the door and the boy Saul ran to see who was there. The messenger was very excited. Saul asked, 'What is the matter with you?' The messenger answered, 'Do you not know Jesus is to enter Jerusalem tomorrow?' Then the mother and father came to the door and the father said, 'Is it true that Jesus is to enter Jerusalem tomorrow?' When the messenger left, their father told them a story about their uncle, the blind Bartimeus."

Another manuscript was in dialogue form:

MARY: Martha! Martha! Do you know who is going to be at the Passover?

MARTHA: Yes, I know. Jesus is going to be at the Passover. He is the man who healed the blind man, do you remember?

MARY: I am so glad he is going to be at the Passover!

MARTHA: Oh, here comes John!

JOHN: Hello, Martha. Where is Mary?

MARY: Here I am!

JOSEPH: Hello! Martha, your mother wants you.
(Martha meets her mother as she goes out.)

MARTHA: Mother, do you want me?

MOTHER: Are you ready? I am going to tell you a story about the lost sheep. And do you know anything about Jesus?

MARTHA: Yes, I know when Jesus called the little children unto him and said "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

MOTHER: I am glad you know something about him too.

RUTH: (Comes running in.) Everybody is waiting for you! Hurry, Jesus is at the gate!

FATHER: Come, Mother! We are going now. (Then they go.)

When these manuscripts were submitted various favorite stories were missed by different members of the group. "But we can't tell all the stories, it would take too long." "They (the audience) wouldn't listen if we talked too much." "How would it be," suggested the leader, "if on the Sunday before the play we should have stereopticon pictures in the worship service and review for everybody the stories we have in mind when we give the play? Then we won't have to say so much about them. They will be in everybody's mind." That idea appealed.

With quite a little help from the leader in introduc-

ing action, some suspense and forward movement, the following brief play evolved. Members of the group had occasion to know what the fear of being dispossessed may mean. The changed attitude of a home owner illuminated for them concretely what Jesus' influence had done for Zacchaeus when the publican promised "the half of my goods I give to the poor." The pupils understood that the text of their play was an interpretation of the Bible text, "the way it *may* have happened," not the Bible text itself.

The children loved the singing, carrying the palms. Their study of the Copping, Hole, Tissot, and Petersham[6] pictures to determine their costumes helped put them into the feeling of the Bible times.

Attention was paid to grouping and disposition of colors so that the comparatively large number assembled in the chancel before the processional would not appear merely a huddle of children but make a pleasing picture. The "family" came in first and stood slightly to the left at the center. The two groups coming, one with Josiah in the lead, the other with Judith, were disposed toward the right. Miriam, who became known as "the herald child" was dressed in vivid red and stood at the front, quite to the left, balancing with the pronounced color of her garment the greater number of characters opposite.

The audience was asked to take part in this play of Palm Sunday by repeating the Hosanna song with the

choir as the children would disappear down the center aisle "to meet Jesus on the road from Bethany." It was just a little vignette of a play, but the congregation entered into the spirit of it, and it was the high point in a Palm Sunday service of song. Their work in producing it had helped the responsible group to a better balanced knowledge of the stories and of the character of Jesus beside giving them the pleasure that always comes with "giving a play."

A PLAY FOR PALM SUNDAY

SETTING—*A village near Jerusalem.*

[FATHER, MOTHER, SAUL, *and* MARY *enter rear right, stand toward right of center.*]

FATHER: Are we all ready to start our journey to Jerusalem?

SAUL: Yes, Father, let us start, for it is quite a good walk.

MARY: Is it really true, Mother, that Jesus will be in Jerusalem?

MOTHER: O yes, Mary. Every year, like the rest of us, he goes up to Jerusalem for the Passover. Just the other day, when Jesus was visiting with his friends, Mary and Martha, I heard him say that he was going up too.

SAUL: [*Eagerly.*] I'd like to see Jesus, Mother. He tells such lovely stories and I have heard you talk so much about him. I wish that I had gone along with Uncle Bartimeus that day on the Jericho Road!

JOSIAH: [*Comes excitedly with* PHILIP, RUTH, NAOMI *from rear left.*] You know Zacchaeus? Who lives on the road from Jericho? He that has that lovely house?

MARY: [*Somewhat contemptuously.*] Yes, Zacchaeus, the publican. Publicans cheat. No wonder he is so rich.

JOSIAH: [*Confidently.*] But he does not cheat any more.

FATHER: Maybe he never did, Mary. Not all publicans do.

JOSIAH: Anyway, he paid *all* the taxes himself for old Reuben and his wife, and for the widow Miriam and her family. Now they don't have to be dispossessed! They can stay where they always lived and they are not worried any more!

PHILIP: How did Zacchaeus come to do that?

JOSIAH: He says Jesus staid at his house. That Jesus made him see that helping people is important. Not having things. Zacchaeus is selling his house, just think! That lovely house! He is moving into a smaller one so he can help more people with his money. He is giving up half of everything he owns.

MIRIAM: [*Appears, running from front left, says somewhat breathlessly.*] Jesus is coming on the road from Bethany! He is riding on a colt. I want to run and meet him. Father said I might run ahead. Father says he is surely the Saviour we have been waiting for so long. Come along! Do you think he will tell us some stories?

RUTH: He tells such lovely ones!

[JUDITH *appears, front right, her arms full of palms. There are three or four children with her.*]

NAOMI: Look, Judith has palms for the Passover celebration!

JUDITH: Yes, for the Passover. But—do you remember how we learned at school about the way the kings are

received when they journey into a city? People place beautiful rugs and tapestries over the dusty streets, and flowers, and palm branches—and people sing "Hosanna!" . . . I asked Joseph to help me get these. I want to strew them on the way before Jesus. He is greater than any king. My father loves him very much, and so do I!

REBECCA: Give me one, please. Jesus was so friendly to my mother in the temple when she was worried over the small offering.

[JUDITH *hands half the palms to Rebecca. They give each child one as they hear:*]

CHILDREN: Me, too! . . . Me, too! . . . I know him, too! . . .

MIRIAM: [*Who had remained standing, front left, urgently*]: We must hurry! He is on the way, you know, on the way from Bethany.

JUDITH: Let us sing as we go!

[HERALD *starts them off.* JUDITH, *then all the children, follow down the center aisle, singing, supported by the choir, as they go*]:

Lord, now as we meet Thee, sing we, Hosanna!
Saviour we greet Thee, Lord and King.
Lord, now as we meet Thee, sing we Hosanna!
Saviour we greet Thee, Redeemer, Lord and King.[7]

[*Congregation and choir rise and sing as the children disappear:*]

Lord, now as we meet Thee, sing we, Hosanna!
Saviour we greet Thee, Lord and King.
Lord, now as we meet Thee, sing we Hosanna!
Saviour we greet Thee, Redeemer, Lord and King.

V

THANKSGIVING IN OUR DAY[8]

Children philosophizing about the "problem of evil."

OBVIOUSLY one could not, in these times, celebrate Thanksgiving merely by singing "For Peace and for Plenty," even if bounteous fruit and grain might be decorating the chancel. Fruits and grain enough there were, to be sure, but not peace exactly, and surely not plenty. What might be an honest Thanksgiving celebration for a group of Junior and Intermediate girls and boys many of whom lacked so greatly of the things they might reasonably desire? Thus a certain leader meditated.

Early adolescents, when they are at all thoughtful, can be found to ponder over almost any problem that engages the philosopher. Make a list of the things they discuss naturally and spontaneously in their frequent thoughtful moods and see whether most of the big problems of the ages are not included! This Thanksgiving celebration, therefore, might be the occasion to come to grips with the age-long "problem of evil," at least it might be possible to work out an approach to it.

A group of thirteen and fourteen year old girls needed a new type of activity. Would they respond to

the proposal that they create a Thanksgiving play? the teacher asked herself. They did respond, and the resulting play, perhaps better characterized as a dialogue, was the first experience of the group in "making a play that wasn't a story beforehand." It gave them all the excitement that comes to any creator who looks at an achievement and beholds it to be good.

"It is very near Thanksgiving time," the leader had said to the group, "and I am responsible for the worship service the Sunday before the holiday. That is the time when the church school celebrates Thanksgiving. I hope you will be willing to help. Nothing has been done about the program, but I'm sure we can think of something if we work at it."

"Could we write a play?"

"Yes, there can be plays about anything—surely about Thanksgiving. I have been thinking that a program which is all thanks to God for His good gifts might make many boys and girls in our department who cannot have some things they have a right to want—whose fathers and mothers have been out of work a long time—think that thanking God is all just words. Or that there isn't any God. Or perhaps that He has gone on a vacation. I have been wondering just what would make an honest Thanksgiving this year."

After a few thoughtful moments, one of the girls offered, "God hasn't gone on a vacation. Things just aren't divided right."

From another: "I've just been reading about the big wheat crop in Kansas. And people almost starving here in New York."

"Yes, things are growing just the same."

"Is there enough sunlight and air for everybody?" the leader asked.

"Surely."

"Then why is it that so many children need to play in crowded tenements and dark streets?"

"We don't have enough playgrounds."

"There isn't enough money for playgrounds."

"Sure there is! Didn't you read the other day about all the money that went into handsome official limousines that nobody needed and were much too expensive anyway? There was a lot in the paper about that new piece of graft. My father was angry. Times are bad enough without that!"

"Whose fault is it that there is so much graft in our city?" the leader asked.[9]

"Everybody's fault. If more people voted right and cared there wouldn't be so much graft."

The leader: "The Jewish people celebrate Thanksgiving every year—Thanksgiving for deliverance from captivity in Egypt—but they do not merely say thanks for God's gifts. They beg His forgiveness for not being more worthy. Repentance is an important part of Thanksgiving for them. Suppose the Pilgrim Fathers had celebrated Thanksgiving so. What might they have

been sorry for, if they had truly known themselves?"

The blackboard soon showed quite a list:

Ill treatment of the Indians
Not appreciating beauty
Superstition about witches
Falling asleep in church, though feeling
  righteous for attending long services
Being harsh to people

"Suppose, to complete our own Thanksgiving, we decide what things we should be sorry for."

The list was longer, including:

The way we treat Negroes
Public funds used for private gain
Being selfish with what we have

"I know what we can do for a play," came the eager proposal of a bright girl. "We can have two girls stand and talk together about there being no reason for Thanksgiving this year. Then in the rest of the play things can happen that make those girls change their minds."

That plan, as a general pattern, proved very acceptable.

"Let's get the grafter's limousine in. We could have somebody get hurt playing in the street—a grafter's limousine run over him. That would give us a chance to say if public money were spent honestly we would have more playgrounds."

The "grafter's limousine" had appealed to the imagination. Evidently it was destined to figure in the play.

"And could we have Tom (the church's Negro janitor) in it?" came an eager suggestion. "He's so nice and he would act well. We've got to have something about making things better for Negroes. We've been so hard on the Puritans because of the way they treated the Indians!"

A number of the girls promised to give thought, before the next meeting, to the various possibilities.

Several manuscripts were brought and one proved very acceptable as the basis for the introduction of the play, and for most of the conversation after Scene I, which was decided upon as the "playground scene."

The first scene needed much discussion and change. The girls had plans, originally, for very gory havoc to be wrought by the "grafter's limousine," but when they thought further they realized that too many of the details were impractical in a church chancel play, where there can be no curtains, where exits and entrances are virtually a part of the play, where action needs to be the simplest. They discovered also that restraint at this point served their purpose better.

In the "Negro scene," submitted by one young author, some self-righteousness had to be deleted. The criticism offered by one of the group was readily accepted by the rest, that: "The white girl sounds as if

she thought it was something special to play with the Negro girl. She ought to do it the way it should be, all at ease with each other."

The last scene was written by an ardent member of the intermediate department finance committee—the committee which carries responsibility for the benevolence budget. The leader raised the question whether the speeches in this scene were not a little "goody-goody," but the group was unanimous that "that's all right. That's the way a little girl would talk." The scene was given the important final place because it dealt with a problem that "any one can do something about *now and here.*"

Various changes were made during the progress of the enterprise, in the conversation between scenes. "The woman who thinks it is all God's fault mustn't change her mind so fast; it has to be so that she changes her idea a little after each scene," commented one youthful critic.

The following is the text of the play as it was presented in the boys' and girls' Thanksgiving service.

A THANKSGIVING PLAY

INTRODUCTION

First Woman: Here it is Thanksgiving time again, when people say thanks to God for all His good gifts. I

have not noticed this year that God is good, and many of the people in my neighborhood have had only trouble. If there is a good God, He must have deserted us, or how can the world be in such a condition as it is now?

SECOND WOMAN: Oh, I don't think God has deserted us. It is the fault of people that things are not right.

FIRST WOMAN: But what have the people to do with it?

SECOND WOMAN: There are many children who do not have as much fresh air and sunlight as they should have to play in and be healthy, but surely that is not because God has not made enough fresh air and sunlight. Listen. You've read about the wheat crop in Kansas, haven't you? [FIRST WOMAN *nods.*] Many people here in New York are really starving unnecessarily. If, together, all of us in the United States had sense enough, we could get the wheat and other food distributed so that everybody had enough.

FIRST WOMAN: Hm-m-m-m. I don't know. I'm sure that God has left us and there's nothing to be done.

SECOND WOMAN: I'm positive you will change your mind. It is God's way to work through people, isn't it?

FIRST WOMAN: Look what has happened!

SCENE I

[MOTHER *and* VISITING NURSE, *leading child between them, enter.*]

MOTHER: [*Agitated.*] My poor Mary! She has played in the street all her life. I used to be afraid she might get hurt, but I've not worried lately.

VISITING NURSE: It is only a bruise. Mary is not hurt badly. Just frightened! It is a wonder more children don't get hurt.

MOTHER: They tell me it was a big new limousine that hit her.

MARY: The boys on the street called "grafter's car, grafter's car!" I heard that. What did they mean?

NURSE: I suppose the boys have been reading in the paper that some of the public's money has gone into buying cars for officials and they knew, or thought they did, that the car that hit you was one of them.

MOTHER: I wonder if the time will ever come when some of the public's money that goes for graft now is spent for better housing and for playgrounds! If we want our children to have fresh air and sunlight, we have to send them into the streets. The houses are dark and there are no playgrounds!

NURSE: [*Examining arm.*] Your arm does not need attention, Mary. You were frightened, weren't you? We can be thankful your injury was not worse. So many children get hurt every year! My home is just around the corner. Come with me. I have a fine story book for you to read while you rest a while at home.

[NURSE *leads* MARY *away, followed by the mother.*]

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCENE I AND SCENE II

FIRST WOMAN: My, wasn't that a shame! I'm sorry for the little girl!

SECOND WOMAN: Yes, that happened because there aren't enough playgrounds. You see, the child had to play in the street and so it was nearly killed by that hand-

some limousine. The money that was spent for that should have been spent on a playground, where children would be safe.

FIRST WOMAN: You are right!

SECOND WOMAN: You would not say, would you, that God does not give enough sunlight for everybody, and fresh air? People just have not learned to manage things so everybody gets his share!

FIRST WOMAN: How true your words are! About sunshine and fresh air, anyway. It is a pity there are so many thoughtless people in the world!

SECOND WOMAN: I wonder what things *I* am thoughtless about! Maybe there are people who believe God has forgotten them only because *I* have not been thoughtful enough!

FIRST WOMAN: I had not thought about that! I must hurry home now. My Helen is apt to play with children I don't want her to play with. Several Negro families have moved into the neighborhood, one into the house right there. Helen feels sorry for the little girl because some of the neighbors snub her.

[*Before the women leave, the attention of the two is arrested by a* NEGRO FATHER *appearing on the opposite side of the chancel, soon joined by his daughter and Helen.*]

SCENE II

Before a Negro home, presumably

NEGRO FATHER: [*Shaking his head, looking troubled.*] My Eva has been pretty lonely in this neighborhood. The

white children have not let the Negro children play with them and Eva had not thought before that one's color made any difference. It has hit her pretty hard to learn it makes a big difference to some people. I am afraid she thinks it is a cruel world. The other day she said: "Daddy, I'm afraid God does not love us the same as other people. Why should I thank Him on Thanksgiving Day?" What can I say to her?

[EVA (*Negro*) *and* HELEN (*white*) *come in together happily, arm in arm.*]

EVA: I had such a good time today, Daddy!

FATHER: That's nice. What did you do?

HELEN: We realized in our club that Eva and her cousins must be lonely in this neighborhood. So some of us came over today to ask them to play basketball with us. They are fine players.

EVA: It was the best fun!

HELEN: I stopped in because I'd like to see the picture the teacher at school told us Eva had made so well.

EVA: It is upstairs.

HELEN: I'm coming. Mr. Hart, may Eva stop at my house next week and see my hobby book?

FATHER: Surely.

[*Girls run along.*]

FATHER: It looks like Eva might be having a little help now to get over the idea that God has forgotten us. [*Exit* FATHER.]

DIALOGUE BETWEEN SCENE II AND SCENE III

FIRST WOMAN: Helen said she was going to play with Eva and I had not wanted her to. I see I was wrong.

SECOND WOMAN: What makes you say that?

FIRST WOMAN: I am seeing it was I, and not God, who kept one person at least from being happy.

[*The appearance of two girls arrests the attention of the women.*]

SCENE III

LUCY: Come on, Anna, I have a dime. Let's buy some candy.

ANNA: Why spend your money on candy when you can spend it on something useful?

LUCY: Oh, well, I want to buy something to enjoy. My mother buys all my necessary articles.

ANNA: Why not wait until Sunday, if you are so anxious to spend it? You might enjoy doing that!

LUCY: Why wait till Sunday?

ANNA: Why not put it in the offering plate in the boys' and girls' service? There are a number of boys and girls in our Sunday school who can't give as much as usual because their fathers and mothers lost their jobs like so many other people in the world now. Those of us who have anything at all to give need to think about giving all the more.

LUCY: I know it is important to give our offering every Sunday. I had not thought about its being more important than usual.

ANNA: If some of us don't give more than we did, we'll not have enough to make up for those who can't give as much as before.

LUCY: That's right. If we did not send what we promised, that school in the South and some of the other places that depend on us might think it was because God had forgotten them. All right. Here's an extra nickel of the dime for the offering Sunday. [*Girls exit.*]

DIALOGUE AT END, AFTER SCENE III

SECOND WOMAN: A Jewish friend reminded me the other day that they, the Jewish people, have a day of repentance with their Thanksgiving. It would not be so bad if we had that.

FIRST WOMAN: I see there is reason enough. When we say thanks to God for his good gifts, we should ask His forgiveness too for not helping Him enough.

SECOND WOMAN: I know I said in the first place that people were at fault that many did not know God loved them. I see it better than ever now.

FIRST WOMAN: I'm going to celebrate repentance with Thanksgiving. That is a good idea of the Jewish people. I will say to God "I thank you for all good gifts," but I'll also say, "I'm sorry I did not help you any better." I'll be both glad and sorry. And then I'll try to do better.

The "play" held the interested attention of a large audience of boys and girls. The second scene probably furnished the most memorable impression, due to the dignity and imagination in the participation of the janitor, and his young niece, as Negro father and daughter. *"Wasn't* Tom nice!" was the delighted com-

ment of his friends, the fellow members of the cast.

The question would be in order: How was the dramatized repentance made more truly a reality in the children's lives? Was there any "follow-up"? But that would be another and a much longer story.

VI

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Two informal dramatizations of the same story.

THE same Bible story in both cases, and yet how different the dramatizations! The plays were developed by two groups of twelve and thirteen year olds; one of boys, the other of girls; in both instances a first experience in putting a story into dramatic form. In both classes the story told by the teacher had followed the Bible text fairly closely, except that names were given to the three servants, because "first servant," "second servant," or "the five-talent man" would be cumbersome in dramatic presentation and in discussion. In both classes there had been active discussion of the meaning of the parable, and reason, on the teacher's part, to believe that the problem was clearly understood and the story vividly imagined, so that a dramatization might be done with sincerity.

The question "What characters do we need?" would seem to call for a very simple answer. What could any one who understood the story say but "A master and three servants"?

That is what the boys said who created one of the plays,—what they said at first.

"How would you begin the conversation? What does the Master say?"

Immediately they felt the need for another character.

"A great Master like that wouldn't just holler for some one to come. There'd be a servant, a messenger, handy to go after whatever he wanted."

So a messenger was added to the list of characters.

When the servants were brought in at the Master's command, the question came: "How would they stand?"

Further increase of the cast became imperative to the boys when they had decided that the messenger's place was beside the Master, the servant's before him. Perhaps some picture of Solomon in all his glory, or of Pharaoh and his court, or of some cinema court scene, was in their minds. The arrangement was much too simple to please them.

"There ought to be two sentinels, one on either side of the Master, holding spears."

No one expected to use real spears. The boys merely imagined those warlike court trimmings in this informal play, just for the class.

Sentinels were chosen and placed to the satisfaction of all.

Still the cast was not complete. The dialogue was well under way. It had come to that place in the story

where the Master says to the first servant: "Here are five talents," when a protest arose: "A great Master like that would not just hand over so much money himself, as if he always kept it in his pocket, or his belt, or wherever he might have kept his pocket money. There ought to be a treasure-bearer!"

And so a treasure-bearer was chosen.

"After the Master had gone away, what happened?" was the question which led into the planning of the next scene. As children often do when they are not yet experienced in the construction of plays, they wanted to "act out" everything that is suggested in the story. All three of the servants were to be busy making money, conducting business enterprises in various parts of the room,—banking, selling, farming. The leader suggested that plays were usually planned for one particular place in a room, the stage.

"Suppose you imagine people here to see the play. They could not look all about the room at once!"

Then there must be three scenes, one after another, showing what the servants did. The leader conceded that possibility, but pointed out that there was not much story in that. Was it so important to know, in this story, the details of these ways of making money? But what then should be done to let people know what happened while the Master was gone? Could some one tell about it?

"Oh, yes. I see a way. Don't you know, like in the

movies—they bring in the soldier killed in battle and you all know from the conversation there had been a battle, but they didn't do the fighting on the stage!"

Their discovery of the use of well distributed exposition for the purposes of story presentation gave the boys much pleasure and was not forgotten in future dramatic enterprises.

The second scene was finally imagined in a simplicity much in contrast to the first plans. The third servant tells what the others are doing as he criticizes them and expresses his own intentions and reasons.

The third scene was easily planned, following the Bible text rather closely. The boys liked the familiar "thee" and "thou" in the Bible dialogue. ["We're used to that, studying it that way."] But it seemed awkward to use that form in the rest of the conversation. If the play had been intended for public performance, a next step would have been the harmonization of the language setting.

The Bible ending of the story was not considered satisfactory for the ending of a play.

"It doesn't sound like an ending of a play just to send the servant to punishment, and then nothing more. Couldn't the Master say 'Now let us go to the feast'?"

And with an invitation to a feast the story ended, perhaps because the players were always hungry ado-

lescents, probably because of the common desire of humans for a happy ending to any story. And, indeed, a happy ending is not at variance with the Bible story.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

SCENE I

The Master's Audience Room

[MASTER *sits in tall-backed chair, center of stage; a* SENTINEL *stands on either side,* TREASURE-BEARER *at* MASTER'S *side,* MESSENGER *near exit to left of* MASTER.

MASTER: Messenger, please call my servants, James, Joses and Jude. I have something important to say to them.

[MESSENGER *leaves at left and returns with three servants, who bow and stand at attention to left of the Master.*]

MASTER: I am going into a far country and I do not know just when I shall return. Before I go, I want to leave my possessions in your care. You may decide yourselves what you will do with them. I trust you with them. Treasure-bearer, give James five talents.

JAMES: I thank you, Master, for trusting me so much. I will do the best I can.

MASTER: Treasure-bearer, give Joses two talents.

JOSES: I thank you, Master, for trusting me so much. I will do the best I can.

MASTER: Treasure-bearer, give Jude one talent.

[JUDE *receives talent and bows.*]

MASTER: It is not that I do not trust you all the same. I gave you my possessions according to your abilities, according to the amount I know you can take care of. Just do the best you can. I don't know when I will be back. You may be dismissed.

[MESSENGER *leads servants out.*]

SCENE II

Along a roadside, some days later

JUDE: [*Speaking to himself.*] I think James and Joses are very foolish to work so hard for the Master with the talents he gave them. He will take them all back anyway, even though he did not earn them. He gathers where he did not sow. I will dig a hole in the field over there and hide my talent in the ground.

[JUDE *leaves.*]

SCENE III

[MASTER *with* SENTINELS, MESSENGER, TREASURE-BEARER, *as in Scene I.*]

MASTER: Messenger, bring in my servants, James, Joses and Jude. [MESSENGER *leaves.*] I gave them big responsibilities, but not too big for them, I feel quite certain.

[*Servants enter, bow, and stand in line toward audience at left.*]

MASTER: A long time ago I went away to a far country and when I left I put my possessions into your care. What have you done with the talents I gave you?

JAMES: Master, you gave me five talents. I worked with them and gained another five. Here are ten talents.

MASTER: Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. Joses, what have you to say?

JOSES: Master, you gave me two talents. I worked with them and gained another two. Here are four talents.

MASTER: Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

MASTER: [*To* JUDE, *who stands silent.*] Jude, what have you to say?

JUDE: Master, I knew thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow and gathering where thou didst not scatter. I was afraid and hid my talent in the ground. Here is thine own.

MASTER: You wicked and slothful servant! If you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter, why did you not at least give my money to the bankers? Then I might have taken it back with interest. Treasure-bearer, take his talent from him and give it to James, who has ten talents. For to him who has shall be given. Messenger, take the unprofitable servant away to be punished.

[MESSENGER *leads* JUDE *out of the room.*]

[*To* JAMES *and* JOSES.] I am very much pleased with your faithfulness. Well done. Come now to my feast. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

[MASTER *leaves, followed by servants, then the sentinels.*]

In the case of the second dramatization, done by a group of seventh-grade girls, the pupils were content

with just the four characters mentioned in the story. Indeed, they voted down the suggestion that a messenger call the servants, asking: "Why can't the Master just clap his hands?" They saw no reason for pomp and circumstance, and they liked having the whole story in the "way we talk, no 'thees' and 'thous.'" But, as in the first case, a happy ending was considered necessary.

SCENE I

[MASTER *enters room, stands thinking for a moment, then claps hands and messenger appears.*]

MASTER: Reuben, please find Luke and Simon and bring them to me. [*Messenger bows and leaves.*] It will take me such a long time to transact my business, there is so much to look after in the far country where I am going, but my affairs here at home won't take care of themselves either; I'll have to get some one to take care of them for me. Now who shall it be? Luke has carried responsibilities before and has always done it well. I'll let him take care of the larger part of my goods while I'm away, but all of it is too much for one man. Simon must help him. He is dependable, too. Matthew has been rather lazy, but I'd like to give him another chance.

[MATTHEW, LUKE, *and* SIMON *enter.*]

MASTER: I am going on a long trip and I want you to take care of my possessions. Luke, here are five talents.

LUKE: I will guard your talents faithfully.

MASTER: Simon, I am trusting you with two talents.

SIMON: I will do as my master wishes.

MASTER: Matthew, I give you one talent.

MATTHEW: Yes, my lord.

MASTER: I am interested in all of you. I am dividing my possessions among you according to the ability you have shown. Good-bye. I do not know how long I shall be gone. When I return you may make your accounting.

ALL: Good-bye. [*They bow low and leave.*]

SCENE II

[*The three servants stand conversing.*]

LUKE: I have been working hard in the silk business which I built up with the five talents the master gave me, and results are showing. I will be able to give him good returns on the money he entrusted to me.

MATTHEW: I have not done anything with my one talent as yet. I think you are foolish to work so hard, and he won't be back for a long time.

SIMON: My two talents have almost doubled. Perhaps by the time the master comes they *will* be doubled. What makes you think, Matthew, the master won't come for a long time? He has been gone a long while. He may be back at any time.

MATTHEW: Well, I don't think I'll do anything with mine, anyway. I'd have to return it all to him. I'll dig a hole in the ground and hide it till he comes. It will be safe, at any rate. I'm going to look for a spade right away. [MATTHEW *leaves, the other two shake their heads, then go too.*]

SCENE III

[MASTER *stands with the three servants before him, the messenger at his side.*]

MASTER: I am glad to be back at home again. Have you taken good care of my possessions?

LUKE: Yes, my lord. I invested your money and now have ten talents to give you instead of five.

MASTER: Well done, you good and faithful servant! I will promote you to be the overseer of my lands. Come and share your master's feast. How about you, Simon?

SIMON: I, too, have invested your money and have doubled the amount you gave me. Here are four talents, instead of two.

MASTER: Well done, you good and faithful servant. I will promote you also, Simon. You have served well.

MATTHEW: Here is your money; the one talent you gave me. I knew you were a hard man, who took what did not belong to you, and I was afraid, so I hid it in the earth.

MASTER: You rascal and idle servant! If it were true that you are afraid of me, you would at least have given my money to the bankers, and I would have had interest on the capital. You have been lazy and unfaithful. Take this good-for-nothing servant into the darkness outside! [*He is led away by the messenger.*] Now Simon, and Luke, come with me to the homecoming feast.

VII

"ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY . . ."

Some insights into Life gained while writing a play.

THEY had been interested in the interpretation of Holman Hunt's picture, "The Light of the World," this class of seventh-grade girls, and that study led to the formulation of a list of "picture names" given Jesus in the New Testament: light of the world, the vine, the way, the bread of life. From that interest came the impetus for a study of those "picture stories," the parables. The girls became veritable sleuths for "stories that have deeper meanings back of them," not neglecting even Æsop's Fables. All of Jesus' recorded parables were studied before the girls were ready to call this section of their class work finished.

When they had studied the Parable of the Talents, their teacher suggested that they write a story which would express the meaning of that parable in terms of the lives of girls today. The suggestion met with approval, especially the girls' amendment: "Let's make a play out of it, and if it's good enough we can give it in the worship service!"

"Our mothers give us responsibilities, and the older ones in the family have different things, harder things,

to do than the younger. Let's make it a play that lets the "talents" stand for difference in experience in the home!"

A simple situation, that, and a workable one. So it was accepted.

"The father and mother might go on a long journey and leave the three daughters to look after things in the house."

So it was left. Several of the girls promised to write outlines of plays with that setting. At the next meeting one of them had the following manuscript to submit:

SCENE I

MOTHER: John, we must be going soon on our trip.
FATHER: Yes, Mary, but when are we going?
MOTHER: In a week, so we will have time to get packed.
FATHER: All right. It will be in a week's time then.

SCENE II

MOTHER: John, please tell the children to come here.
FATHER: Yes, Mary. (The FATHER goes out to get the girls.)

SCENE III

MOTHER: My dear daughters, your father and I have to go on a trip and will be away for six months.

I will leave you in Janet's care and hope you will be obedient and listen to her (the maid).

ALL THREE: We will, Mother, we will.

SCENE IV

(MOTHER and FATHER return from their journey.)

MOTHER: My daughters, I am glad to be back with you all. Tell me what you have done while I was away. I will start with the eldest.

FLORENCE: Mother, I have helped Janet in the house and have run errands for her. I have helped my sisters all I could.

MOTHER: That was well done, and I shall reward you by getting you the wrist watch which you have been longing for.

FLORENCE: Thank you, Mother.

MOTHER: Helen, what have you done?

HELEN: Mother, I have done my share of the housework, and helped Alice with her lessons.

MOTHER: Well done, and I will reward you by getting you that party dress which you have been longing for.

HELEN: Thank you, Mother dear.

MOTHER: I am satisfied with your work, dear daughters, and I am glad to see that I can trust you when I have to go away.

The young playwright had not known how to deal with the problem of the faithless one, or else interest had lacked in a character who received punishment and not reward.

A wrist watch and a party dress! No one in the class had objected to those very material rewards of faithfulness. Evidently all believed that honesty, faithfulness, is "the best policy" in a very literal sense, or did not see the Bible story as a parable, although the discussion had seemed to make that clear enough.

"Do people in real life always have something given them when they have been faithful? Something money can buy?"

"Yes, generally," thought some.

"Do faithful people get rich, and dishonest people poor?"

"No-o-o." That sounded a little different. The girls had faithful fathers who were not rich. "Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't."

"Let us look up Psalm 73. Maybe that will help us."

"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . . their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish. . . . Behold these are the ungodly in the world; they increase in riches. . . ."

"Do you know of any ungodly who increase in riches?"

"Oh yes, lots of the gangsters!"

"And think of all the money the Mayor made grafting, and he's travelling all over Europe having a good time!"

"But my mother says that fun won't last."

"Most of the gangsters get taken for a ride some time or other!"

"The Psalmist seemed to think as your mother did, and to have noticed in his day, Alice, the same thing you noticed about our gangsters: 'Surely thou didst set them in slippery places . . . how they are brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.' "

"But many have rewards of riches for a long time," continued the teacher. "And how about faithful people? I know a professor in a college in the South where they have absolutely no money now, but he keeps right on teaching. The students garden for him, and bring produce from their homes, and chop trees for him for firewood. But he is very, very poor—no money at all to spend. Has he any reward for his faithfulness?"

"I bet the students like him."

"They keep learning things they wouldn't know."

"Everybody is happier than if he didn't stay there and keep up his spirits."

Some one thought of the play situation again: "Our mothers don't get wrist watches for bringing us up."

"What is a faithful mother's reward?"

"Everybody is happier in the house."

"They enjoy seeing their children grow up good."

"If a mother nursed a child in a sickness, it is a reward to have the child well again."

The idea was taking hold. The discussion could not have been more animated. They dealt with the unfaithful mother. Her punishment is not that anything material is taken from her, they decided, but that she brings unhappiness to others.

Further conversation showed they had come to see rewards in other than material terms. In the play, they decided, the reward of the daughters would be the mother's pleasure and their own growing ability to carry responsibility.

At the next meeting, the rôle of the father was eliminated from the cast. The girls had sensed that it had not been important enough to give the father proper dignity, and "anyway, this is a girls' play. Besides, the things we talk about are the kinds of responsibilities that mothers take care of."

Experience, age, was made the basis for range in responsibility. The tallest girl in the class was commissioned by the pupils to be the "five-talent" eighteen year old, the smallest to be the "one-talent" youngest, aged nine; another, "in-between-size," the fourteen year old "three-talent" servant.

The problem of the responsibility of the youngest, in which she would fail, baffled the group for some time.

It was difficult to think of anything sufficiently plausible. Finally the quietest member of the group surprised all with the suggestion accepted as a brilliant solution: Adelaide would undertake to look after the canary and the plants, and then neglect them. Whether or not the canary should die was found a problem too big to solve at this session.

General plans for two scenes eventually resulted in the following outline:

SCENE I

Mother and oldest daughter discuss fact that doctor has ordered mother into country for a few weeks to recuperate from severe illness. Mother expresses worry about leaving daughters alone. Eldest girl, Grace, says they will manage, each doing her part. Mother suggests that the younger ones be called in to talk matters over. Grace (who works in an office) says: "I'm eighteen now. I can take responsibility for the household, planning meals and looking after things in general." Ruth promises to see to her own and Adelaide's noonday lunches and to look after the youngest sister. Adelaide accepts responsibility for the bird and plants.

SCENE II

After several weeks, mother arrives unexpectedly. Grace and Ruth's reward is in mother's happiness over their faithfulness. Adelaide's punishment is in mother's

disappointment that she has not attended to her duties, and that the family is deprived of joy in bird and plants.

By this time the "play" and its story had become so real to the girls that their imaginations conjured up many details which gave vividness, as, for instance:

"Let Adelaide be sort of whining, and say she wishes her mother wouldn't have to go away because she'd be so lonesome. Then Ruth tells her not to be a baby, but to make it easy for their mother."

Several quite vital manuscripts for complete plays were brought to the next meeting. One of them was used as basis, while additions and amendments were made from the others, at the judgment of the group. As a result, the script finally stood as follows. The play was presented in the church chancel in the boys' and girls' worship service, together with presentation of the Biblical parable of the talents and brief transitional prologue explaining the derivation of the new play.

The only "stage properties" were a chair for the mother in the first scene, and a pathetically lifeless, dried up plant, on a table, in the last.

A PARABLE OF THE TALENTS FOR OUR DAY

SCENE I

[MOTHER *is reclining in chair, weary. Eldest daughter returns from office.*]

GRACE: I could hardly wait for five o'clock to come, that office work be over, to hear what the doctor decided

about you today. I hope you won't need to go to the hospital, but can get well without going there!

MOTHER: I don't need to go to the hospital. The doctor says I must get into the country for a very quiet time for several weeks at least. I could go to your Grandmother's—her home is a lovely place to get well in. But I am worried about leaving you children alone.

GRACE: But, Mother, I am eighteen now, and I can take care of the home for that long!

MOTHER: Go and call Ruth and Adelaide and see what they suggest.

GRACE: Yes, Mother. [GRACE *leaves, returns almost immediately with* RUTH *and* ADELAIDE.]

MOTHER: Children, I must go away for several weeks, the doctor says. I am worried about leaving you alone. Can you suggest anything?

GRACE: I was telling Mother I would be glad to take charge of the house.

MOTHER: I think, Grace, it would be too hard for you after your office work. I want to be sure that you do not overwork.

RUTH: If Grace would plan the meals and tell us what to get from the store, Adelaide and I could do the shopping. And I am old enough to prepare the noonday lunches for Adelaide and myself and to look after Adelaide. I'll see to it that she does not stay in the house after school and read, but gets sunshine and fresh air, like you always make us do.

MOTHER: That would help a great deal. It would indeed.

ADELAIDE: Mother, I wish you weren't going away! I will be very lonesome for you!

RUTH: Don't be such a baby, Adelaide! You want Mother to get well, don't you?

MOTHER: Those weeks will pass quickly, Adelaide, and you can be busy helping Grace and Ruth.

GRACE: I know something you could do, Adelaide! You could look after the canary and keep mother's plants watered.

MOTHER: That is a good idea! Adelaide, will you do that?

ADELAIDE: I might forget. I could not remember that every day!

MOTHER: Oh, but Adelaide! Not remember that much? I am afraid I have not made you carry as much responsibility as I should, so that you would learn to do your share in the household. That is not too much to do. Grace and Ruth, I will expect you not to give any thought at all to the flowers and to Dicky. They are absolutely Adelaide's responsibility. How about it, dear?

ADELAIDE: Yes, Mother, I will look after them.

MOTHER: Now come, you can all help me to get packed. [*All exit.*]

SCENE II

[MOTHER *enters dressed in travel clothes.*]

MOTHER: [*Setting down travel bag.*] Won't the children be surprised! They are not expecting me for several days! My, how nice and clean and tidy everything looks. Grace is a good housekeeper!

[RUTH *and* ADELAIDE *enter, surprised to see* MOTHER, *hurry to embrace her.*]

RUTH and ADELAIDE: Oh, Mother, how happy we are to see you!

MOTHER: Adelaide, how healthy you look. You have taken good care of her, Ruth.

GRACE: [*Just entering, home from office.*] Oh, Mother, what a nice surprise!

MOTHER: You have been a wonderful housekeeper, Grace. You will run your own home beautifully some day, I can see that. But the room looks a little bare. What is it that is lacking?

[MOTHER *rises, picks up plant, looks at it sadly.*]

What happened to the plant? It is all dried up!

ADELAIDE: I forgot to water it, Mother, I was so busy playing.

MOTHER: I'm so sorry! [*Looks about with mystified expression.*] I'd been expecting to hear Dickie sing me a greeting from the other room. It is so quiet. Is anything wrong?

ADELAIDE: [*Hangs her head.*] Mother, Dickie has died.

GRACE: We did feed him when Adelaide forgot, but he must have caught cold, for Adelaide left the window open beside him one night.

MOTHER: I am very sorry to hear this. We cannot have another bird, and even if we did it would not be our own Dickie. But now I must rest a while, and then we will all get supper together.

[MOTHER *leaves.*]

RUTH: I wonder if we did right to obey Mother and not interfere more when Adelaide forgot to care for the plants and Dickie?

GRACE: Mother cared so much for them. It is not really home to her without her plants and canary. But I'm sure we did right. Adelaide has to take her punishment in knowing Mother is disappointed. Come,

> Adelaide and Ruth, let's all help with supper. [*The three leave.*]

It will be seen that the canary's death was finally considered justifiable. "It isn't as if the sisters had stood by while she let him starve. They fed him. But a bird can get very sick from a draft. And that's the way it is in life," the girls said, "bad things can happen from what seems a small unfaithfulness."

VIII

MAKE-UP

They were ready, except for make-up and costumes, to give their play about Livingstone, so the boys reported. But they were not at all ready.

"We want to 'black up' and make our lips red," said the "native helpers" in the cast, and "Livingstone" and "Stanley" were all for the idea, too, that the "helpers" should have their faces blackened. "Or we could cut holes for eyes out of black stockings and pull them over our heads for black faces."

"Livingstone's helpers were black all over," suggested the teacher, "and they didn't wear many clothes." She thought that consideration would make the boys take pause, but they were not in the least perturbed. "Then we'll black up all over."

"This play is for a worship service, you know. You are not preparing for a minstrel show. If you come into the church looking funny, the audience would be busy thinking 'How funny they look!' and would not be thinking about Livingstone."

But the boys themselves had forgotten about Living-

stone for the time being. "How can you give a play without dressing up? We wouldn't look funny. We'd do it right!"

"Yes, we might look funny," one of the more thoughtful among the boys conceded. "Look at George and Ed's light hair and blue eyes. How would they look with black faces?"

"We could be made up brown, maybe," offered George and Ed. "That wouldn't be bad. Let's ask Mr. Ita what he thinks!"

Mr. Ita was the native African whose presence in the church school as "regular substitute" teacher had aroused interest in Africa and had given occasion for the study of David Livingstone's life and the writing of the play under consideration. Mr. Ita had been used by the class as a general information bureau on Livingstone and Livingstone's Africa. To his own delight no less than that of the audience he had recently given an evening's entertainment on Africa, himself arrayed in an African chief's gorgeous costume. He would be a good adviser now—would understand the boys' desire to "dress up." The teacher detained them to suggest one other consideration:

"There is an 'Inter-racial Sunday' every year, you will remember—the Sunday nearest Lincoln's birthday, when people in the churches give special thought to being more fair to colored people. Every year church headquarters send program suggestions to church

school leaders telling different ways of making the most of 'Inter-racial Sunday.' I have this year's pamphlet in my desk, with lists of hymns and stories and plays. It says to be sure and not make up like Negroes in the plays because it makes the Negroes feel badly and does not make white people respect Negroes more."

The boys had listened respectfully, merely. They were eager to be off. "Why should Negroes object?" For the time being the class was interested in "dressing up," although, evidently, they had begun to be thoughtful, for they said to Mr. Ita:

"We're getting ready to give our Livingstone play and we don't know how to dress up to be natives. We can't black up because that wouldn't go with our hair." —"And we couldn't black up all over very well because that would make us look funny."

Mr. Ita laughed. "I know how you feel. I'd feel funny if I should paint my skin the color of yours and tried to play a white man's part." How little like a man he would look! The boys laughed with him, as some of them studied his face and hair rather thoughtfully. Perhaps they were beginning to sense something of the betrayal of the dignity of the black man, their guest, of which they would be guilty if they would caricature the African characters they were impersonating. At any rate one of the leaders among the boys said, "Of course, we can't black up, but we wondered

if you thought that making our faces and arms and legs brown would help."

"I understand what you mean," said Mr. Ita, "You would want it to be apparent to the audience that the 'natives' are of a different race from Livingstone and Stanley. What sort of clothes had you planned for the native helpers?"

"We haven't planned yet. In the pictures[10] they did not wear much, but if we'd wear no more than that we'd have too much skin to black up and the other boys would think we looked funny and that would keep them from thinking about the play. We thought maybe you knew about some clothes the helpers might have worn even if the pictures don't show any."

"Pretty hot there for clothes," interpolated some one.

"But Livingstone and Stanley wore clothes! It *might* be some of the natives did! Lots of natives wear European clothes now!"

"There are some African Christians who wear a loose white garment that covers them. You could have a sort of turban with it, to cover your hair," said Mr. Ita, who wanted to be as obliging as might be, and therefore did not intimate how improbable it was that David Livingstone had induced his helpers to wear such garments. The lady in charge of the costume closet, who was present at the conference with Mr. Ita, said that in her costume scrapbook she had a travel poster showing some dark-skinned people so clothed.

"*There* you are," exclaimed several of the "native helpers" (who had been knights with shields and spears in their last play and *must* have something more exciting to wear than their own Sunday best). "*Now* we're fixed!"

"Stanley" and "Livingstone" and a few of the "native helpers" looked dubious, but the costume lady very obligingly made up one of the "natives" who had volunteered with alacrity for the experiment. But the dark skin, somehow, made him look more Nordic, Aryan, Yankee, than ever, and when, very self-satisfied, he appeared in the meticulously copied white garment, the rest of the group chorused: "He looks like a mahatma!" "That's no good!" they said. "That's even funnier for Livingstone's helpers than blacking up. They never looked like *that!*"

"What can we do then?" asked the despondent "native."

"We'll just have to have the natives wear their regular Sunday clothes," was the decided dictum of the rest of the group, the other "natives" included, and from that dictum there was no appeal. If there was any difficulty about swallowing the disappointment, nothing more was said.

"Here is a poem about Livingstone I remembered the other day," the teacher said, "when we thought the scene with Stanley was rather flat." She read from Oxenham's poem, "Livingstone's Soliloquy."

"That's great!" said the boys, "we could have that read while Livingstone is reading the letters, as if he's thinking that!"

"None of us would do that right—there isn't time enough to learn it. Let's ask Mr. A."

What with delegating a committee to request the minister to read the poem, and deciding that Livingstone would wear a blue cap with gold cord such as is described in all the biographies, that Stanley might wear a tropical helmet, both of them puttees and khaki shirts and trousers—and planning a prologue which would give the audience its bearings, the meeting held much of interest. At the end the natives' costume problem had been forgotten in the excitement about the coming presentation. The only concern in this connection, expressed at the final rehearsal, was, "The other kids might criticize us for not dressing up in a play. They won't know we've got good reasons."

"They won't criticize that point," the teacher assured them, "if they are interested—if the play is given well so that they can feel what Livingstone was like. And, if they do say anything about costumes you can explain. We've had other plays without special costumes, as we have had many without scenery, because plays in church have to be simple. And we can have the program say something about it for those who might not understand—as we did once: 'The play will be presented with not more than a suggestion of cos-

tuming and scenery.' The chancel with its red carpet does not look much like a jungle! You don't seem to be worried that the audience won't have enough imagination to see the jungle there!"

"That's right. What has anybody got his imagination for?"

The simple play was effective. It carried the audience appreciation of the man who would not permit personal considerations to swerve him from the pursuit of his life purpose. The teacher was glad the make-up and costume problem had arisen, that it had guaranteed through its solution a deepened integrity on the part of the players.

DAVID LIVINGSTONE—A PLAY [11]

PROLOGUE: Our class studied the life of David Livingstone because he did so much for Africa and because he was a great man; one of the greatest who ever lived. He was born in Scotland in 1813. When he was only ten years old he had to go to work in a factory. His hours there were from six in the morning until eight at night, but he always studied in the evening. When the time came that he could do what he had long wanted to do, prepare to be a medical missionary, he knew Latin and other school studies so well that he could do very good work in medical school.

Doctor Moffat from Africa had told him of seeing in the early morning sun "the smoke of a thousand villages where Christ's name had not been heard." Then Livingstone decided he would go to Africa. In order

that he might be prepared for his work he did not only study to be a teacher of the Christian religion, and a doctor, but also practiced at carpentry, surveying, and the sciences an explorer needed for he had decided he must go into the heart of Africa where white people had not gone before.

Year after year he travelled and taught and helped people in Africa. He travelled 29,000 miles under very great hardships, most of the journey never before travelled by any white person. Once a lion tore his arm so that it was crippled for the rest of his life. He believed if he could open Africa to trade then the terrible slave trade could be stopped. He felt it was like this: A chief of a tribe would not sell his captives or people of his own tribe to be slaves if that chief could get things he wanted by selling ivory and wood and other things like that.

Livingstone named one lake he discovered after Abraham Lincoln because he thought so much of Lincoln for helping to abolish slavery.

The black people knew Livingstone was their friend and they loved him very much. Many became Christians because they thought his way of living so fine. When he died his servants travelled for nine months with his body to bring it to the coast that it might be put on a ship and sent to his home country. His body was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, in London, with many other famous people. When travellers go to London they are pretty sure to go to Westminster Abbey to see the stone on which there is the following inscription:

Brought by faithful hands over land and sea
here rests
DAVID LIVINGSTONE
Missionary, traveller, philanthropist

Then after the dates of his birth and death it says:

"For thirty years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, and abolish the desolating slave-trade of Central Africa, and where, with his last words he wrote: 'All I can say in my solitude is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one—American, English, Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world.' "

SCENE I

In Camp near Ujiji.

[*Toward the left of center front* LIVINGSTONE is sitting *reading from the Bible to some natives, grouped about him. Two other natives enter from rear right, wearily.*]

FIRST NATIVE: Master, we can find no food.

SECOND NATIVE: We have hunted long and now we are tired. What shall we do? We have had no food for several days!

LIVINGSTONE: My good men, we are suffering and we are in danger. [*Rises.*] But we must not be afraid; our Heavenly Father is still watching over us. If it is His will that we die here, then let us die bravely. But surely He will not let us die yet, for the work we came to do is not yet finished. [*Pauses, speaking to himself.*] We have had no decent food now for weeks. My faithful followers are suffering more than they will tell me.

[*Two natives enter hurriedly. They call breathlessly from rear left.*]

THIRD NATIVE: A white man! A white man!

FOURTH NATIVE: A white man is coming!

STANLEY: [*Enters rear left as the two natives step aside, then follow him to center front where he faces* LIVINGSTONE *and shakes hands.*] Doctor Livingstone, I presume?

LIVINGSTONE: Yes, I am David Livingstone.

STANLEY: I thank God, Doctor, I have been permitted to see you.

LIVINGSTONE: I feel thankful that I am here to weclome you.

STANLEY: My name is Stanley. I have been sent to look for you. It has been so long since any word from you has come that it was feared you were lost.

LIVINGSTONE: No, we are not lost; but we are nearly starved. Have you any extra food with you?

STANLEY: Yes, I have plenty. Plenty for all of us. I will go to hurry my men in unpacking it.

LIVINGSTONE: [*To his helpers.*] Will you help Mr. Stanley?

[*They stand ready.*]

STANLEY: Here is the most important package of all, sir, your letters. They will tell you, what I, too, say— You must come home with me.

LIVINGSTONE: Thank you so much,—and you have saved our lives, sir!

[STANLEY *leaves, rear left, followed by the natives.* LIVINGSTONE *sits down again on his hassock, opens letters and reads and meditates, as from the pulpit is read the following*]:

LIVINGSTONE'S SOLILOQUY [12]

"How is it
With the dear ones over there?

* * * * *

How is it with you all
At Home?

* * * * *

Why should each thought of home
Drag at my heart today?
Why should I longer roam?
Why should I not go home?
Five years of toilsome wanderings
May claim a rest!

* * * * *

Nay, God knows best!
When He sees well
He'll take me home and give me
well-earned rest.
The work is not yet done.
This land of Night
Is not yet fully opened for the Son
And His fair Light.
But—when the work is done—
Ah—then! how gladly will I go—
Home!—Home!—Home!—
To rest!"

[*After brief pause* LIVINGSTONE *exit, with determined step.*]

SCENE II

[*Several months later.* LIVINGSTONE *stands center front, talking to himself, planning.*]

LIVINGSTONE: I want to find the sources of the Nile. That I am bent on doing. But if my disclosures could lead to the suppression of the East Coast slave trade, I would esteem that far greater than the discovery of all the sources together.

STANLEY: [*Enters front left.*] You are looking better. You recovered quickly from your privations, but you are still ill, Doctor Livingstone. I think you must come with me for a longer rest, at home in England.

LIVINGSTONE: The good food you brought has revived all of us. Four good meals a day since you came! And before that for months only two very scanty ones. A big difference! And the news from home has been a tonic, too. But I cannot take a rest now! Tomorrow when you start I go with you a way, then I go on to carry out my plans of exploration.

STANLEY: I knew before I came that you had done a great work. All the world knows that, but since I have been with you and have heard your stories of travel, have read your journals and seen all your scientific records, I am amazed! Your influence is great. Come with me back to England! The king and queen are waiting to honor you. There would be triumphal cheers from all the great historical societies.—But I know you do not care for honor. Think then how glad your children will be to see you and think how

many people you might influence in the cause of missions!

LIVINGSTONE: Others must do that work you speak of. It is my duty to stay. You have seen what the slave trade is like! You know it is not trading, it is murdering for captives to be made into slaves. People at home think I exaggerate when I describe it. These people here depend on me. I must stay to do what I can.

STANLEY: If you are so determined, there is nothing more that I can say. Of course I honor your decision. Now I will go to get ready for our departure. [STANLEY *leaves rear left.*]

LIVINGSTONE: My daughter Agnes says [*Looking at letter reminiscently.*] "Much as I wish you to come home, I had rather you finished your work to your own satisfaction, than return merely to please me." Right nobly said, my daughter, you understand! My blessing on her, and on Stanley, and on all the rest, whom God in His Providence has sent into my life, to enrich it and to help me do the work he set me to do. [*After brief pause, exit.*]

EPILOGUE: Less than a year later, at Chitambo's village in Ilala, Livingstone died. He died while at prayer on his knees. A poet has written about him what people all over the world felt:

Like Him he served, he would not turn aside;
Nor home nor friends could his true heart divide;
He served his Master, and naught else beside,
  Right faithfully wrought he.
    Forth to the fight he fared,
    High things and great he dared,

In His Master's might, to spread the Light
Right faithfully wrought he.
He greatly loved—
He greatly lived—
And died right mightily.[12]

IX

"LET'S EDUCATE THE REST!"

A staged conversation is not drama and does not have the effect of drama. However, this particular conversation incorporated some dramatic elements which gave it emotional power.

THE "Intermediate Council," consisting of representatives of the classes in the department, plans the benevolence budget and feels some responsibility for raising it.

Additional items had to be included in the budget of the new year, and "cuts" in some of last year's items seemed to be necessary.

The suggestion that the gift to a certain mountain school might be decreased called forth violent protest from a member who had been delegated to hear the president of that school speak to an adult group in the church on a recent visit. "They are paying their teachers with squashes and melons now. You can't reduce *them!*"

The American Chinese church, then? "No, that

won't do!" came protest from the committee which had recently visited that church. "So many of their people are waiters and they've lost their jobs. They haven't got anything to go on!"

"How about Barber Scotia College?[13] We give them more than some."

One member of the group had been corresponding with that school, there had been occasional reports about it, but understanding of its place and function was evidently somewhat vague. "We don't know too much about that, and we've never had anything about it in worship service to tell the others. We just keep on giving without knowing about it."

That was heresy, quite out of order, not to know more about a point in the budget! "We've got to get busy, find out more and educate the rest" was the consensus of opinion.

"The chances are, I have been told," their leader informed them, "that any educated Negro woman over sixty years of age, in this city, will have received her higher education in that southern college." Perhaps a graduate could be found, she suggested, preferably a younger woman, who knew the school now, and who would be glad to answer the committee's questions. "How can we find one?" Not a difficult problem, it proved. A Negro minister was the intermediary and a charming young Negro woman came to meet with the committee.

Some surprising questions were asked her by the pupils. Obviously they had always assumed that all races go to school together as in their own New York public schools and they were greatly surprised to hear of race segregation in schools. Other segregations were known to them and had been discussed, but this was a new discovery in the realm of race relations. Perhaps it needs to be said that there was never any manifestation of judgment of the South in the expressions of the pupils. This was true possibly because they had often dealt with the problem of race discrimination as it shows itself in their own community, partly because the historic cleft between South and North was a purely academic matter to them—they had no feeling about it, such as might be imputed to them by adults overhearing their conversation.

The leader jotted down the various questions asked and kept record of the drift of the discussion. At the end of the hour she suggested that in view of the responsibility which the members of the committee felt for imparting information to the rest of the department, they might like to "put on" a public conversation with Miss Lauren, play at learning in public by question and answer what they had learned in committee meeting, a "dramatic conversation" so to speak.

Playing at anything being always interesting, and a novelty in the way of doing it doubly so, the plan met with quick approval.

"That's a good idea! Miss Lauren will ask for questions, as if she didn't know we committee people are all prepared to pop up from wherever we sit and ask her. The rest won't know it is a play and planned, and when they find out it will be a surprise and they'll like it." The questions which had been discussed were arranged in order, to show the beginning, the development of the discussion as it might have been logically if it was not actually, to bring the "conversation" to a convincing conclusion.

It was not a program difficult for the group to prepare, since the young Negro guest was bearing the burden in answering the questions. She graciously offered to attend the rehearsals, which were occasions, again, of much animated give and take between the pupils and their guest. The final result took the following form, in the boys' and girls' worship service on "Race Relations Sunday," Lincoln's birthday. The winning personality of the young guest, the fact that in effect she was telling the story of her own education, and the great interest of the participating group, gave the enterprise more dramatic quality than is found in the script.

The leader of the service introduced the young guest as a graduate of Barber Scotia College, "in which our church has been interested for some years. Does any one want to ask Miss Lauren any questions about her school—and ours?"

MISS LAUREN: [*Stepping forward in the chancel.*] I should be very happy if I could give any information you desire.

WILLIAM: [*Coming up chancel steps from front pew.*] We have heard recently that the people in Barber Scotia are happy because this year for the first time the school is in charge of Negro leaders. Since white people have not yet let Negroes teach in their schools, I wonder why they did not let Negroes teach in their *own* schools?

MISS LAUREN: It takes a long time to prepare people to teach and an even longer time to prepare them to take charge of a boarding school. All of these years since the Civil War some white people from the North have been teaching Negroes in the South and it has not been many years since they have been ready to take charge of the schools.

WILLIAM: [*Commenting.*] One is always apt to do that—run other people's shows for them if they let you.

FLORENCE: [*Appearing from opposite side, taking stand at left of* MISS LAUREN.] I have been told that if I met any Negro woman of sixty who came from the South, who had a better than grade-school education, she would be pretty likely to come from your school. Is that so?

MISS LAUREN: Yes, I think you would find this true in New York and it is especially noticeable in the South that a large number of the colored women over sixty who have had more than a grammar-school education received it at Scotia. Another thing noticeable in the South, especially in the states of North Carolina and South Carolina and Georgia, is that in every town you are apt to find at least one minister whose

wife is a Scotia graduate and I think it is safe to say that in every larger school a Scotia graduate has been employed at some time as a teacher.

Alice: [*Coming from front pew to stand beside Florence.*] Barber Scotia is a denominational school—that is how we came to be interested in it—because our church is responsible for it. Are there no *public* high schools that the Negro young people of the South can attend?

Miss Lauren: Yes, there are some high schools now, some very good ones, but there are not enough for all the people who want to go to school and they have not always been in existence. Years ago when Scotia was started there were no public schools for Negro children and if it had not been for the church schools and the white teachers, Negroes would have had very little chance to learn anything.

Roger: [*Appears from down the center aisle, magazine in hand.*] I have been reading in this magazine that there is a county in Alabama where only $1.51 is spent a year for the education of each Negro child, while $57.00 is spent for each white child. There are many other figures that show a big difference all over the South. How is it possible that the difference in cost is so great when they are in the same school?

Miss Lauren: But they are not in the same school. You see, in the South there is a law forbidding white and colored children to study in the same school and the people who plan the school buildings often build nice schools for the white children and not very nice schools for the colored children. Some sections are very poor and there is not much spent for *anybody's* education, but the white children somewhat nat-

urally get the best of it since it is white people who dispense the money. In some sections the schools for colored children are just shacks with poor ventilation, improper heating, broken benches, bad blackboards, if any, and hardly any equipment of any kind. The schools for Negro children are so far apart in some places that many pupils have to walk as far as five miles to school daily. These schools cannot open until ten or ten-thirty in the morning because the pupils cannot arrive sooner, and they have to close at two or two-thirty in order that the pupils may get home before dark.

MARGARET: But teachers' salaries are a big expense. How can there be such a difference if there have to be teachers for all of them. Is there a difference between the salaries of the teachers of the white and the teachers of the colored children?

MISS LAUREN: Yes, there is a great difference in teachers' salaries. In counties where so little is spent for each colored child, the teachers' salaries are very small and the only people willing to teach for such small sums are usually very poorly prepared. Often they are employed only because they have a mother or sister or aunt who cooks for a member of the School Board. I once knew a teacher who taught fractions in this way: If he were adding ½ and ¼ he took the top numbers and added them and then the two lower numbers and he said the answer is $^2/_6$!

ROGER: [*Jokingly.*] We should adopt that system.

MARGARET: We have already. [*All laugh.*]

MISS LAUREN: There is another reason that so little is spent on the colored children in some sections and that is that the school term is only a few months in the

winter when the children are not needed on the farms. In many places the children have to pick cotton until late in the fall and then have to plow the fields for planting early in the spring. A friend of mine told me that on one occasion while she was teaching in the South, she scolded a fourteen-year-old girl about her lessons. The girl was so hurt over the scolding that my friend asked some questions about her and found that she had been in school only *one week* of her life! The little that she knew had been taught her by her mother at night, after the work was done, by candle light.

MARGARET: That story is another proof that they are ambitious, too.

MISS LAUREN: You will find that colored children are just as eager to learn as white children and some are even more eager because their parents did not have a chance to go to school. When the arrangements were completed for me to enter Scotia my mother told me that when she was a girl she had longed to go there to school. She did not have the opportunity but she was glad to see her dream realized in one of her daughters.

WILLIAM: We thank you for opening our eyes to so many things.

FLORENCE: To think that while so much is spent on each of us there are children in our country who have no chance to learn anything!

ALICE: Opportunities surely aren't divided very evenly!

MISS LAUREN: I want to thank you and the teachers and the other members of this Sunday School for your interest in our school and for the contributions which you have sent there for so many years.

ALL THE PUPILS: Thanks again, very much, Miss Lauren.
[*They return to front pews,* MISS LAUREN *to guest chair in chancel.*]

In the original plan the remark about holding on to power once exercised was criticized by the Negro guest because it might seem to apply to the school in question, in relation to which it would not be justified. It was changed to have more general implications, but permitted to stand because it is an acknowledged problem in race relations. Several remarks were put into the specific places where they appear because it was found at practice that "Florence and Alice would otherwise have to stand in the group too long without anything to do and feel awkward." The comment about fractions was included because all had laughed at the smart remarks made in that connection in the original meeting and they seemed to give a light touch considered of advantage in the "conversation." At "dress rehearsal" these supposedly light remarks were criticized for the momentous somberness with which they were spoken. When the "play" had been given, the first eager question was, "Did we laugh all right?"

The experiment in "dramatic conversation" had been successful so far as could be judged. The participating group had undoubtedly benefited from the enterprise, the audience had listened with quite tense interest. A question asked of the responsible group afterward: "Do you know as much about conditions in our

own Harlem?" spurred to renewed concern with the race problem close at home.

One young member of the congregation came home to say to his mother quite simply: "I'm never going to say 'nigger' any more." Without question, however, the investigating group had been the chief learners.

Barber Scotia's "item" remained in the benevolence budget by common consent.

X

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

The basic work was done for the pupils, then they helped finish the play. The whole congregation took part.

MIGHT they give a play, they asked. No, they had no particular preference concerning the subject matter. They would just like to "give a play." They were girls who, in connection with some Old Testament studies, had been answering for themselves the question why the architect and the builders of their own church had put into the glass panels of the church doors the figures and names of David and Solomon. The girls were inexperienced in the writing and producing of plays. The time which might be allotted was short. The material which obviously presented itself was somewhat difficult to handle. For the class to have done all the work would have taken more time than the calendar permitted and would probably have wearied their inexperience.

Therefore the leader plunged the group into a play more than half planned out of material the girls understood. The characters and situations could be real-

ized readily and made their own. Enough of the work of playwrighting was left to give the class the satisfaction of being fellow-creators of a lovely thing, for the resulting play must be that, since it would be distinctly a worship play.

In effect, this is the problem as it was put to the group: You have been inquiring and you have learned why the people who built this church have put the names and pictures of David and Solomon into our church doors. All the other classes come through those doors too. They would be interested in sharing your findings. You would like to give a play and a play would be a good way to share what you have learned. There is not much time to write a play, but perhaps it will not need to take much time. Much of the conversation is right in the Bible, you will find. How about these three scenes: (It would have taken quite a little time, possibly, for the class to have found its bearings in the long period of time covered, to have determined upon scenes which had importance, to have achieved proper progression, a fitting climax. Here all that was an accomplished fact.)

"The first scene would show how much David cared to build a temple, why he might not and his son might; the second would be some years later, when Solomon is grown and his father puts on him the task; the third scene would show Solomon dedicating the temple. For the costumes we would be guided by these pictures

from Tissot and Copping and Hole.[14] We could pretend that all the people in church on Sunday morning when we give the play are the people who came to the dedication of the temple and we could help them feel they are a part of the play. It would be a fine adventure to help all the people in the congregation be in the play and feel they were there when the temple was dedicated! Then they would all understand why the builders of this church thought of David, who cared so much to have a beautiful building for worship."

"It sounds nice. Could we do it?"

"Of course you could. It would take hard work to put it on as nicely as it would have to be done, but we should not need a very long time."

They remembered the story of I Chronicles 17 and the reason why David was denied the privilege of building the temple. "I'll confess to you," said the leader, "that I have written a first scene. You can change it all you want to later. But I thought the start would help and then you could put your time on the second and third."

After reading the first scene the high points of the story of David's preparations and of his giving the task to Solomon were read from I Chronicles 28 and 29.

"The trouble is," said some one interested in having the class represented well in the cast, "that there are so few people, just David and Solomon and Nathan in the story." "How about the stewards and the captains

and the mighty men the story tells about?" came the leader's question. "Surely," assented the girls, "David was too much a king to collect all that wood and that mass of jewels himself. He would have a chief jeweler and a chief carpenter and a lot more people helping him."

Different members of the group undertook to study the chapters by the next meeting and to have written by then brief reports by the chief carpenter, the chief goldsmith, the chief silversmith, and the representatives of the people of whom it is told that "they offered willingly" and thereby gave David great joy. The expression "glistering stones" appealed to the imagination. The chief jeweler was enjoined to be "sure and get that in, 'glistering stones'!" When the speeches were written they were found to sound "not like Bible language," like all the rest, and some help was needed to approximate Bible rhythm and expression in the "reports."

Solomon's dedicatory prayer was judged, of course, "Much too long!" "Nobody could learn it and nobody would listen that long." The class spent most of one session finding the "nicest sounding parts," and judging what was most valuable, and "the parts we could all understand without explanations." The re-study of the prayer with the drama in mind seemed to be quite an enjoyable enterprise for all and some eight verses, later still more cut, were agreed upon for use. On re-

reading, the end of the first scene was found to be abrupt. The leader called attention to Psalm 72, known as "David's prayer for his son," and the group agreed to use the beginning of that prayer as end of the first scene, to help show "how David felt about things."

Excitement was unusually high when it came to the choice of the cast. The girls wanted the play well done, and also, quite naturally, a number had desires themselves to be David or Solomon, perhaps in part, because the royal robes would be such fun to wear. It was decided to "read around" the first scene. Those who did it best would be David and Solomon. But—there were none of outstanding ability. A number, in the judgment of all, were equally proficient. Copies of the play as it stood had been multigraphed. "Let's take it home and study it and read it again the next time."

On the following Sunday it chanced that a newly-enrolled girl was assigned to the class. None of the group knew her for she had only just moved to the city. After the new girl had been briefly introduced to the project in hand the "reading around" was begun, as agreed upon the previous Sunday. The newcomer showed unquestionable ability in her interpretation, she had a splendid voice, and her quick perception of the parts compelled the respect of the group. "She does it the best!" some one commented. "She ought to be David!" said several. And to the teacher's surprise they all assented. It was somewhat perplexing. The new

girl had done nothing to create the play, had not been among those who had begged to "give a play." "Are you sure you think it is quite fair?" asked the teacher. "You have done the work and Thelma has just come." "But she does it the best!" they said, and voted her the rôle, chiefly, no doubt, because they trusted her the most to carry it well, probably also because it was easier so than deciding between several aspirants equally gifted in an average way.

The rôle of Solomon was considered for a girl who had taken great interest in the writing of the play, who could be depended upon to memorize well and to interpret with intelligence, but she was quite short in stature. It was voted to another girl the class could trust to have poise, not to get stage-struck and forget the longest speech in the play. "Solomon ought to be tall," they thought, and the short girl thought so too. To her was voted the part of "Introducer." The reporters' parts and the pilgrims' and Nathan's were voted to the remaining members of the group.

All parts are so important, the leader said, that they can make or mar the play, even though they are short, for you play the whole time you are on the stage, even when not speaking. (As it happened several of the pilgrims played their short parts with such fine feeling and understanding that the success of the last scene in kindling the imagination of the congregation and making all present "a part of the play" was due to these players

possibly as much as to "Solomon.") Several Tissot pictures were chosen as guides for the costuming and the "costume lady" was interviewed for proper effects. The regal red robe worn by David in the first scene, clothed Solomon, as a sign of his succession, in the last. On David's head and later on Solomon's was put a red velvet cap fitted into a gold band, after one of the pictures.

There were no stage properties except a tall backed chancel chair drawn into the center of the chancel. The "Introducer" told how the figures in the church doors had given occasion for the writing of the play; she helped the audience find its bearings in the time setting by a brief reminder of David's desire to give the ark, still in the "tent church," a permanent and beautiful home because he believed that the place for the worship of God should be as beautiful as man could make it; finally she described briefly the setting of each scene:

". . . The third scene is the dedication of the completed temple by Solomon. By that time we hope you will feel yourselves a part of the play and be members of the host of pilgrims in the temple court. When the pilgrims are asked to sing, will you all join in the second and third stanzas?"

The class had reason to be satisfied with their choice of cast. The girls interpreted their parts effectively (after careful coaching and practice, of course), and

the play seemed to be a true worship experience for the participants in both chancel and pew.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

SCENE I

DAVID: [*Seated on his throne, thinking.*] At last the ark of God shall have a permanent resting place! Nathan, the prophet, said to me yesterday, "Go, do all that is in thine heart, the Lord is with thee." I must hurry with the building of the temple. These plans have long been in my thought. The workmen must begin the foundations even now, while there is peace in the land. It *will* be *beautiful!*

NATHAN: [*Entering front left.*] King David! The Lord came to me in the night saying, "Go tell David, my servant, thus saith the Lord, thou shalt *not* build me an house to dwell in."

DAVID: But yesterday thou didst say. . . .

NATHAN: I know, but it would not please the Lord if thou didst build His house. Thou knowest the law of the Lord forbids that priests of his holy place be warriors! May then a *warrior* be the *builder* of his temple?

DAVID: [*Thoughtfully, slowly.*] Thou art right. [*Proudly.*] The Lord chose me before all the house of my father to be the king, and he has helped me cut off my enemies before me. But—[*Meditatively.*] I *am* a man of war.

NATHAN: Thine enemies are subdued. Thy son will have peace. Let thy son build a house for the Lord. The Lord said to me, "*He* shall build me an house."

DAVID: [*With decision.*] My son shall build the house of the Lord, but I will finish these patterns of the sanctuary, and prepare the gold and the silver and the precious stones for the courts of the house of the Lord, and the porch and the treasuries, and the upper chambers and the inner parlors, and the place by the mercy seat. Wilt thou, Nathan, tell Joab, to plan with me for all manner of workmanship and skill and service, to prepare for the building of the sanctuary?

[NATHAN *bows in assent and leaves front left.* DAVID *rises, steps forward.*]

DAVID: Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that Thou hast brought us hitherto? Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness to the king's son, that he may judge Thy people with righteousness and Thy poor with equity. They shall reverence Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. [*Exit rear left.*]

SCENE II

[*Present in the half circle at the right are the chief craftsmen: the carpenter, the goldsmith, the jeweler, and the silversmith, and two representatives of the people bearing an ornamental chest laden with gold, silver, and jewels, which will be their offering to the building of the temple. They bow low as* DAVID *enters rear left and takes seat.*]

DAVID: [*Talking to the craftsmen and the people.*] My brethren, for many years I have been preparing to build a temple, a house wherein our Lord may be

worshiped. You know my plans, and today I have called you, my chief craftsmen and workers, to hear your reports. But first I have sent for Solomon, my son, who will carry out these plans. Even now he comes.

[SOLOMON *enters from front left—comes up chancel steps, and bows low before his father.*]

Solomon, my son, thou knowest how it has been in my heart to build a temple unto the name of the Lord God. This day shalt thou, as the Lord hath commanded, take up the task of building that house.

SOLOMON: I am eager, indeed, to begin the work. But why hast thou chosen *me?*

DAVID: The Lord has chosen thee. The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "David, thou hast been a great warrior, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, therefore thou canst not build me an house of worship, But thou shalt have a son who will have peace. He shall build my house." And so, Solomon, have I been preparing that thou mayest build what is in my heart. Here is the scroll of my plans.

[SOLOMON *takes scroll and bows again.*]

Now come and stand beside me that thou mayest also hear the reports of our craftsmen. [DAVID *signals to each in turn, who bows and then reports.*]

CHIEF CARPENTER: The people of Tyre have sent cedar wood in great abundance and I have assembled many men to carve it.

CHIEF GOLDSMITH: We shall make ready many fine tables for the shew bread and the altar of incense, from the gold thou hast collected.

CHIEF JEWELER: With many precious stones, glistering and of numerous colors, shall the walls be set.

CHIEF SILVERSMITH: And I, O King, have many thousand talents of silver, with which to make gleaming lamps and candlesticks and basins and instruments for the altar.

DAVID: You have done well, indeed, my workmen.

[*Two* REPRESENTATIVES *of the people step forward with chest overflowing with gold and jewels.*]

FIRST REPRESENTATIVE: O, King David, we bring word from thy people. They would praise thee and thy son exceedingly and they rejoice that the temple is to be built.

SECOND REPRESENTATIVE: And even as they have thus far willingly given they will give again of their store that the house of the Lord may be beautiful.

DAVID: I rejoice with the people and receive their gifts thankfully, but to the Lord God goeth praise and glory. We give Him of His own willingly even as He gives us. And now may He bless us and make us strong to do this work.

[DAVID *leaves, right, followed by* SOLOMON, *as the other players bow, then they exit, right also.*]

SCENE III

[*Two* PILGRIMS *are speaking as they near the chancel steps from left front.*]

FIRST PILGRIM: Let us walk with reverence, for, see, we are entering the temple court!

SECOND PILGRIM: Oh, is it not beautiful! Such a house is, indeed, a glory to God.

[*Two* PILGRIMS, *followed by several more, come from right front.*]

THIRD PILGRIM: Let us rejoice, that we, at last, have a chosen place where for many generations to come the ark of the Lord may be safely kept.

FOURTH PILGRIM: And where we may come and worship the Lord God!

FIFTH PILGRIM: [*From right front.*] But one thing lacks. It is too bad David has not lived to see the desire of his heart fulfilled. A house of the Lord, just as he wanted!

FIRST PILGRIM: Look, here comes Solomon! The ceremony of dedication is about to begin.

[SOLOMON *enters from rear left and stands at center of chancel near the steps, the* PILGRIMS *stand on the chancel steps.*]

SOLOMON: [*Raising his arms.*] Let us bless the Lord!

[PILGRIMS *kneel.*]

O, Jehovah, God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven or in earth.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!

Yet, hearken unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel; and when thou hearest, forgive.

If any man sin against Thee, yet if he pray towards this place and turns from his sin, then hear Thou from heaven and forgive the sin of Thy people.

Moreover concerning the foreigner who cometh from a far country for Thy name's sake, when he shall come and pray toward this house, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do all that the foreigner calleth to Thee for; that all people of the earth

may know Thy name and that they may know this house which I have built is called by Thy name.

Now, therefore, arise, O Jehovah God, into Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength, and turn not away from the face of Thy people. Remember the mercies of David Thy servant. Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

[PILGRIMS *rise, also choir and congregation. All sing the following hymn*]:[15]

The Lord ye know is God indeed.
Without our aid He did us make;
We are His folk, He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise,
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? the Lord our God is good,
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.
Amen.

NOTE ON CASTING: It happens sometimes that a group of pupils, themselves not very adventuresome, will be inclined to make a habit of choosing the same persons to play leading parts, especially if they are people of outstanding ability. If on any subsequent occasion the class described in this chapter had again voted to let the same girl take the leading part "because she does it best," the teacher would probably have vetoed the decision. Possibly she would have said something to this effect, "Thelma has had a turn at playing the most important part, some one else should have that opportunity now. Besides, I have nominated Thelma for a part in a play the young people are giving, for which they wanted an

experienced player of your age. One of the rest of you must have the fun and the opportunity she had the last time when the class gave a play. There are a number of you who can do it very well if you work at it hard enough."

Personal ambition can play havoc with casting, but it need not if the leader remains objective and assumes that team work is important, that problems are faced frankly and that shortcomings for any particular part are accepted honestly. So the "short girl" was not commiserated with because of her short stature. She happened to be small, that is all, and this rôle seemed to demand a person at least as tall as the others in the cast. Sometime when a short person was needed she would possibly come into her own.

If it is the group spirit that one does what is best for all, the occasional over-ambitious person, except he be quite abnormally so, learns to submit because, after all, he will care to have the members of the group think well of him. So on one occasion a pupil came to her teacher to ask release from a part she had promised to take. "I had a part in the choir program last week, and in the club last month. I'm afraid the girls won't like me if they think I want to be *it* all the time."

While it is true, of course, that a leading rôle poorly played spoils a production more quickly and completely than a minor rôle can ever do, still it is quite justifiable and indeed very necessary that a leader point out the importance of minor rôles, as suggested in the foregoing chapter. And the fact that the number of words spoken does not measure the opportunity for playing usually needs emphasis. Children need to learn that so long as any character is on the stage he is playing, even when he has nothing at all to say, and that the way he plays while he is not speaking has much to do with the success of the scene.

XI

THE SECRET OF THE STARS

A dramatic production can well be a real experience to children even if they have not written it themselves, but it must represent an experience into which they can enter if they are to play with sincerity.

THIS is the story of a Sunday-after-Christmas play, and the action of the story begins several weeks before Christmas, in the Junior Weekday Club.

They were remarkably unaware of the world of the stars, this group of city children. "I will use the interest of the season," said the leader of the club, "to introduce my group to some star lore. Then they will be better prepared to sense the atmosphere and feeling of the story of the wise men who followed the star, and incidentally begin to live in a world bigger than that bounded by city masonry!"

A few members of the group, it transpired, had studied the heavens a little during a stay in camp one summer. Did they know, the leader asked, that the star nearest us, the very nearest star, is 25,000,000 miles

away? Twenty-five million miles! The children were obviously interested in trying to imagine the distance and knowing it could not be done. And Sirius, the bright star one can always find in the sky, Sirius is 51,000,000 miles away! If one travelled millions upon millions of miles the stars would finally become fewer, like street lights on the edge of a city, but that would not mean the end of the universe. Another city and another, and many another of stars are beyond. The nearest of those other "star cities" beyond ours is so far that it takes the light from there 18,400 years to come to us.[16]

That was enough as an introduction—more figures might have been wearying. As time went on, the leader knew, she would find more and more opportunity to acquaint her pupils with the world of the stars. Some one in the group remembered to have been taught in public school Sara Teasdale's poem "Stars."[17] The teacher knew the poem too, had been prepared to teach it that day, so the whole group now said it, stanza by stanza, sensing at least vicariously, it would seem, something of the majesty of the starry heavens which had inspired the lines:

STARS

Alone in the night
  On a dark hill
With pines around me
  Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars
  Over my head,
White and topaz
  And misty red;

Myriads with beating
  Hearts of fire
That æons
  Cannot vex or tire;

Up the dome of heaven
  Like a great hill,
I watch them marching
  Stately and still,

And I know that I
  Am honored to be
Witness
  Of so much majesty.

In very ancient times, the leader went on, before people had learned to read or write, before there were any books, before ever any one thought of books, the sky was a picture and story book which people loved to read. Had they, the Juniors present, ever seen pictures in the clouds, played the game of making pictures in the sky? All of them had. That was the way the ancient people saw pictures in the stars.

Many of these people in the East were shepherds, living outdoors night after night, having much time to think and to wonder. Some were seafarers, with only the stars to guide them. Therefore the starry heavens

were noticed a great deal. Year after year, at the same seasons the people would see the same star patterns in the sky, "constellations" we call them. Their imagination made pictures of these patterns, and year after year they looked for these pictures and told their children stories about them.

The leader told the myth of the "Big Bear and the Little Bear"[18] and of the constellation near that one, "Berenice's Hair,"[16] the latter a story from history. So the people in those days long ago read into the stars the stories of their gods, their kings and queens, their great heroes. Not only the past did they read there, but also the future, promises of great things to come. That is how it came that people whose greatest hope and wish was the coming of the Saviour, watched for a new star which they believed would announce his birth. So the story came to be told of the beautiful new star which told that Jesus was born. "God answers prayer" is what the star seemed to say, and that is the star story Christian people love best.

The children all knew well the story of the wise men following the star, and they retold it with renewed interest. There are other stories, not in the Bible, the leader said, of people following a star new in the heavens to find the Saviour and bring their offerings, and she told them the old legend of the "Secret of the Stars."

The children enjoyed the story. A grown-up, very

fond of it too, who heard of the children's pleasure, wrote an arrangement of it in pantomime and song and tableau for them. They were delighted with the plan of presenting it in the children's service and did so on the Sunday after Christmas. The story seemed to please the congregation as much as it had pleased the performing group.

The larger part of the story was played in pantomime, accompanied by the reading of the corresponding part of the legend. The last and climactic scene was done in tableau. The manger had been placed in position behind a screen before the service began. The little Mary and Joseph were there behind it too, sitting comfortably until just before the time to remove the screen, when Mary, in her red tunic and blue mantle, was seated behind the manager, and Joseph, in his dark garment, staff in hand, took his position beside her.

The screen was of lattice work, interlaced with Christmas greens and laurel branches, an effective background for the earlier part of the presentation. It was not heavy and was easily set aside by several of the older boys when the time for the tableau scene came. For that scene the three travellers had slipped behind the screen unobtrusively and had taken their positions indicating devotion while the audience was engaged in singing the hymn stanza indicated.

The minister took the part of the "Introducer." An

eleven-year-old whose good voice and enunciation merited for her this part, was chosen "Interpreter," and she wore a choir gown, like the pupils who had assisted in the worship service preceding the "play." The "child," dressed in a simple tunic of white, was a few years younger than the rest of the ten and eleven year old members of the cast. The travellers wore colorful garments copied from pictures of old-time residents of Persia and Arabia. The brass-worker was distinguished by his leather apron and, of course, his kettle, a very gleaming one in the last scene; the wood-cutter carried a basket of chips, the artist a "balsam" branch.

THE SECRET OF THE STARS

INTRODUCER: [*Who comes to center of chancel whenever he speaks.*] Legends are stories which could not really have happened just as they are told, but they usually tell truths deeper and greater than matter-of-fact stories could possibly tell. Many legends have been told in connection with the Christmas story. One of them, which we all know well, says that the wise men of the Bible story, who followed the star and came to bring their gifts to the Christ-child, were really kings from the Orient.

Our play today is based on a quite different legend about the followers of the star. It speaks not of wise men, nor of kings riding on gorgeously bedecked camels, but of humble workers, travelling on foot. That God saw splendor in their honest and simple enterprise, the story tells by way of a miracle, after

the manner of legends. The legend is called "The Secret of the Stars."

ORGAN INTERLUDE: Chorus of "There's a Beautiful Star."[19]

INTERPRETER: [*In pulpit.*] The stars knew a beautiful secret, and it was this: When the Christ-child would be born, the Saviour of all the earth, a new star was to appear, more wonderful and more bright than any of the others. When it would appear only the very best people would be able to see it, people courageous and honest of soul and loving in spirit. When these best people would see the star they would recognize its meaning, and they would take as gift whatever they happened to have in their hands and go to find the Christ-child.

In Persia a brassworker saw the star. [BRASSWORKER *enters rear left, carrying kettle, comes across chancel to front right. He looks to sky in wonder, then walks on resolutely.*] In his hands he was holding a brass kettle, which he had just finished at the end of the day's work. He did not know where the star would lead him but it showed the direction he must go, and, carrying the kettle he had made, he set out to find the new-born Saviour.

In North Arabia a woodcutter saw the star. [WOODCUTTER *with basket appears rear right and comes toward center front during next sentence.*] After a day of work cutting wood he was on his way home with a basket of chips in his hands. When he saw the star he knew its meaning immediately. [*Looks to sky as if making sure of direction, then off front right during next sentence.*] Letting nothing hinder him, he too started on the journey, and he carried with him his basket of chips.

[*From rear left to front right and exit comes* ARTIST.] In South Arabia an artist saw the star and he set out with the balsam branch he was carrying.

[*Brief interval of music—several strains of "The March of the Magi," Dubois, suggest travelling along the way.*]

INTERPRETER: [*All* TRAVELLERS *are out of sight, having gone toward the right.*] As they were travelling in the same direction, the three men finally met at a crossroads and then they journeyed on together. After a time they met a child that had lost its way and was sick with hunger. They cooked food for the child and comforted him. They walked with him for a distance, [*The three appear from right, leading the child.*] so that he might feel confident. Then they bade him Godspeed and sent him on his way home happy. [*They wave to child as he waves good-bye and disappears rear left.*]

Then they looked at the gifts they had brought for the Christ-child. All had been used in helping the hungry child they had met. [*Here pantomime of showing each other kettle, ashes, branch, with troubled looks, then as if to say "We can only do our best" set forth resolutely.*] The kettle was black and sooty, from the fire made of the chips of wood. The wood had become ashes. And the balsam branch was no longer beautiful for it had been used to stir the food cooked in the kettle. But the three travellers did not tarry to be troubled about that. "It is all we have" they said to each other. "We must follow the star carrying *whatever* we have," and they journeyed on in the direction of the light that guided them.

[*The three* TRAVELLERS *leave right front,* INTRODUCER *comes to center.*]

INTRODUCER: As we imagine these three travelling on, before we see the end of their journey, we will sing, while remaining seated, the stanza printed on our program, "There's a Beautiful Star." [19]

[CHOIR *and* CONGREGATION *sing*]:

There's a beautiful star, a beautiful star,
That weary travellers have followed afar;
Shining so brightly all the way
Till it stood o'er the place where the young child lay.
Star, star, beautiful star! Pilgrims weary we are;
To Jesus, to Jesus, We follow thee from afar!

[*Under cover of the singing, so to speak, the three* TRAVELLERS *have slipped around the choir seats from the rear and disappeared behind the screen, where they have taken position with the "transformed" gifts —a very shiny kettle, and colorful boxes for frankincense and myrrh, such as artists portray in nativity scenes. Screen remains for present.*]

INTERPRETER: [*Who has remained in pulpit through interpolation and the hymn.*] The three followed the star on and on, carrying the sooty kettle, the ashes which were all that was left of the wood chips, and the balsam branch which had been used to stir the food. Finally they came to the place where the Christ-child slept in the manger, with Mary and Joseph watching over him.

[*Screen moved aside during short strains of music, revealing tableau of* MARY *and* JOSEPH *looking into manger—*JOSEPH *standing at the back toward the*

right—and the three TRAVELLERS *standing and kneeling toward the left, in attitudes of adoration, offering their gifts.*]

Behold, to their wonderment, as they presented their humble offerings these had turned miraculously into royal gifts for the new-born king. The sooty kettle had turned to shining gold, the wood ashes to frankincense, the worn balsam to myrrh. So the humble best which each had brought shone with a glory and splendor the givers had never dreamed to see.

CHOIR: [*Sings unannounced while tableau is held.*]

As with gladness men of old[20]
Did the guiding star behold,
So may we be led to Thee,
So, with humble hearts, may we
All our life and treasure bring
Unto Thee, our heavenly king.

LEADER: May we all rise and sing together the stanza just sung by the choir and printed on the program:

[*Congregation with choir*]:

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
So may we be led to Thee,
So, with humble hearts, may we
All our life and treasure bring
Unto Thee, our heavenly king.

[*After first several strains screen is restored to place before manger.*]

After the service some of the grownups present tried to analyze the reasons for the unusual degree of pleasure the congregation had shown in the presentation. They said one reason was the simplicity and childlikeness of the story, enhanced by the fact that maternal solicitude and fatherly concern were portrayed by so very young a "Mary" and by a "Joseph" so young and normally so very exuberant. They believed that the gravity of the behavior of the humble followers of the star was so convincing because it was young children's portrayal. Perhaps it was the color, these grownups said, or possibly the fact that the production gathered up and made a melody of the reverberations of Christmas still in the air. Or most likely the theme had special appeal to a group not endowed with worldly position or material possessions.

One subsequent year, in a second presentation of this same "play" though by another cast, all these values were lost. The audience was left, if not cold, at least quite cool, and the players were not happy about it. The contrast supplied a telling lesson. The illusion was destroyed because the medium intruded. The playing lacked imagination.

In the second presentation the children had been introduced to the story too hurriedly. They did not feel it deeply. There had been too much reliance on the play itself, and on its previous success. "It went so well the last time, we can repeat it without going to as

much trouble as a new play would cause," had been the argument.

Perhaps the cast was not as well chosen. Most parts demand expressive faces and bodies, especially when the medium is pantomime. Some people are "tied up in bags," to use Stevenson's phrase. Their bodies have not learned to be servants of their imaginations and cannot be made so by a few, even though thorough, rehearsals. For their own sakes even more than for the sake of the audience, such children need to begin with parts not so demanding. Although the awakening of sleepy imaginations must be accepted as one of the teacher's chief tasks, it must be conceded that there are individuals whom the good fairies passed by when they were handing out the gift of imagination.

In the second presentation the pantomime and the reading did not harmonize with precision. The exigencies of the Christmas season had been the extenuating circumstance, but there just had been too few rehearsals. Suppose circumstances were such that, although they could play with sincerity and with enjoyment to themselves, the players could be only puppets so far as the effect upon the audience was concerned. Then they might have been *good* puppets, gaining poise from the experience and being spared the sense of failure always incident to a disjointed performance. It would seem that there is no escaping thoroughness in dramatics, even in the week after Christmas.

XII

THE ANGEL-WHO-ATTENDS-TO-THINGS

Pupil responsibility for the benevolence budget of the church school was one impetus for the production of this play.

A CLASS of thirteen-year-old girls had been studying the lives of a number of great women, of Bible times and later times, and present days. They had written a play about Ruth of Moab in the previous semester. Now they wanted to write one about a "modern woman," they said.

Many of the pupils in the school remembered Sibusisiwe Makanya, a gifted young Zulu woman, who had spent several student years in New York. The church school had voted to support her work among her people in Natal, South Africa.[21] It devolved upon some class to acquaint the boys and girls new in the department with the meaning of the "Makanya item" in the benevolence budget, and to call to the minds of those who might have forgotten, the significance of this particular piece of work in Zululand.

The young playwrights chose Sibusisiwe Makanya as subject of their play and were doubly interested:

they were writing a play about a "modern woman" they knew, and they were doing their stint of service in their group by helping create and sustain interest in the benevolence budget. Their class representative in the Council could report: "My class will take care of the education on the Makanya item. We are writing a play about her for the worship service."

Interviews with friends and acquaintances of Miss Makanya, perusal of letters, circulars, and pamphlets about her and her work, study of collections of snapshots sent from her headquarters in Imbumbulu, Natal, South Africa, gave the girls and their teacher much of the material they needed. For an understanding of the South African situation in general, and the particular need for such educational work as Miss Makanya's, they studied Ray E. Phillip's book *The Bantu Are Coming.*

The girls learned to understand why the rapid industrialization of South Africa is forcing native Africans to learn in one generation what white races had centuries to accomplish. They saw these Zulus floundering helplessly, thousands of them dispossessed of their land, and, through the disorganization of tribal life, deprived of standards, authorities and modes of life which had guided their past. In Phillips's book the class noted a list of wishes a group of Zulu women had expressed. All the wishes had to do with demands the new kind of world in which they were living was

making upon them as homemakers and mothers. This list gave the clue for the design of the play.

A general plan of the play was projected in class, individual members then wrote scenes which the class accepted or rejected or used as the basis for revised plans. The group encountered no particular difficulty in writing a first scene, in which the Zulu mothers expressed their needs, and a last one, which dramatized the help Miss Makanya had brought them, but they were baffled by the problem, "How do we get Miss Makanya into it, and show that we knew her while she was studying here and that we like having a part in her work, and keep it simple, without too many scenes?"

A grown-up adviser suggested a plan whereby the "angel-who-attends-to-things" [22] would be prolocutor and interlocutor, really a sort of general manager, who would represent the providential influences bringing all the people together. The girls liked the idea very much. The angel added a poetic and whimsical quality to the play which they greatly enjoyed.

In the presentation of the play under consideration the angel's demurely playful air, and the readiness with which all the characters followed his leading while seemingly oblivious to his presence, seemed to carry to the audience the feeling the playwrights had about their angel as a symbol, merely, of divine guidance. These effects were attained, it may be added, only after much careful coaching.

The play was produced in the chancel one Sunday morning in the boys' and girls' worship service. There was a minimum of stage properties, no make-up, and costuming was of the simplest. In the first scene the native women wore very drab formless garments. In the last scene crisply laundered dresses with attractive lines served to dramatize the help Sibusisiwe Makanya had given in teaching domestic arts. The angel, one of the taller girls in the class, wore a very simple long white robe, and a severely simple silver disk fitted to the back of her head as halo.

THE ANGEL-WHO-ATTENDS-TO-THINGS

SCENE I

In Imbumbulu, South Africa

ANGEL: [*Standing center front, introduces "himself"—tells his mission.*] I am the Angel-who-attends-to-things. Perhaps you do not believe in angels? That is too bad! It does not change the fact that I *am* the Angel-who-attends-to-things! And there is always so much to attend to, especially in these times. It was revealed to me that Africa has need of much help, so here I am in the little village of Imbumbulu, in Natal. Here are some of the people coming from their huts. Perhaps they are talking about some of the things that trouble them. Perhaps, though unseen, I will be able to serve them.

[*First and second* AFRICAN WOMEN *come from front right and left.*]

FIRST WOMAN: We are early for our maize pounding today.

SECOND WOMAN: Yes, I wonder how soon the other women will join us.

[*Other* AFRICIAN WOMEN *come from two rear entrances, all sit down to pound maize.*]

FIRST WOMAN: Have you heard about the missionary doctor who is making sick people well without using magic?

SECOND WOMAN: Yes, I heard about him, but he is too far away to be of any help to us when any of our people are sick.

THIRD WOMAN: My neighbor told me that when she had a job with a family in Durban and the little boy was sick, a nurse came to the house and took care of him. In a short time he was well again.

FIRST WOMAN: If only some one would teach us what to do when some one is ill so we ourselves can help as that nurse did.

[*Pause—as women think about this wish.*]

FOURTH WOMAN: My husband is tired of eating maize, maize, maize all the time. He said when he worked in the big city he had many different vegetables to eat,—peas, carrots, tomatoes, and beans.

THIRD WOMAN: How can we buy vegetables when we have no money?

FIFTH WOMAN: We might grow them ourselves. If only some one would teach us how to raise them and how to cook.

FIRST WOMAN: I wish it were possible for us to have nice clothes like people in other lands. I hear our people in the cities wear them.

FOURTH WOMAN: If only some one could teach us how to sew the materials we weave, our clothes would not be expensive.

FIFTH WOMAN: Since our tribal life is broken up we don't have any more fun. We need some one to teach us how to organize ourselves so that we can have some fun.

SECOND WOMAN: Our children need to have some fun, too! When the boys tend the herds all day they are very lonesome and do not know how to amuse themselves. I wish my boys knew how to read!

SIXTH WOMAN: It is well to wish these things but right now it is time to go home and cook our maize for supper.

THE OTHER WOMEN: Yes, so it is.—It is time.—Good-bye.

[WOMEN *leave, each in direction from which she came.*]

ANGEL: I have it! I know some one who would be just right for them, some one who could give them just the help they need. Sibusisiwe Makanya! She is a born leader, she understands the needs of her people, she will know all the good things in their old tribal life on which to base the Christian teachings, she has a heart to serve them. But she needs more training than the African schools are ready to give her. What can be done? [*The* ANGEL *is lost in thought for a moment.*] I have it! There is that Foundation which uses its money to send African young people to other countries to study! Surely there is no one more worthy of their help than Sibusisiwe Makanya! They must help her!

[ANGEL *off with determined air.*]

SCENE II

New York Two Years Later

[ANGEL *comes from rear and stands center-back.* MISS MAKANYA *enters from front.*]

MISS MAKANYA: [*Self-communing.*] It has been wonderful to study here in America these past two years. I have learned much about teaching and I have done much thinking about my people in Africa. I am so glad I was born a Zulu, so I can best help my Zulu people. There is so much in our Zulu customs and music and folklore that is lovely. I will use all that as preparation for the teachings of Jesus. So many things there are to do that will make the lives of my people happier. Very soon I will return to Africa and begin my work there. Only the money is lacking to start that work! [*Laughs.*] *Only* the money! A pretty big lack I am afraid, although we won't need much. My people have practically no money. They will build the community house we will need and they will bring the wood from the forests. Still it will cost some cash expense and we workers will have to live!

[MINISTER *who has been led forward from his seat in the chancel by* ANGEL, *steps forward here and tells of possible help from several churches he knows of, our own church included, and some individuals.*]

MISS MAKANYA: Oh, thank you so much. Now I can go back home without further worry!

[*Shakes hands—leaves rear right.*]

[MINISTER *has spoken very briefly at this point so that* MISS MAKANYA, *after thanking briefly may go off*

stage and change her costume while further explanation is given. During conversation of MINISTER *and* MISS MAKANYA, ANGEL *has come to stand below before member of Pupils' Finance Committee, who is seated in front pew. As soon as* MISS MAKANYA *has said thanks and good-bye to the* MINISTER *the* ANGEL *steps forward and the* PUPIL REPRESENTATIVE *follows up chancel steps.*]

PUPIL: [*To* MINISTER.] Our Boys' and Girls' Finance Committee is working on the budget for next year and we are considering several new items. Several Sundays ago that very nice young Zulu woman spoke in our worship service and sang for us in her language. We all were interested in her and we wondered what you thought about putting an item into our benevolence budget for her work?

[*The* MINISTER *commends the idea, tells a little more about her need of backing.* ANGEL *looks happy and claps hands when* MINISTER *ends something like this*]:

I am sure between us we will find a way to support Miss Makanya's work.

PUPIL: Good! That will be fine. [*Both return to their seats.*]

ANGEL: [*Stands in thought for a moment, says with doubt in voice.*] I wonder whether what I said is true, that *I* am the Angel-who-attends-to-things. I do not seem to be the *only* one at any rate.

[*Exit rear left with thoughtful air.*]

SCENE III

[ANGEL *enters from rear left.* AFRICAN WOMEN *enter, rear right and left, dressed in bright colored*

house dresses. MISS MAKANYA, *in a simple summer dress, enters rear right carrying football and scrapbooks.*]

MISS MAKANYA: How lovely you all look in the dresses you made! And see these books and the football the boys in America sent our boys! And the boys are going to lend the football to the girls' school for their play.

FIFTH WOMAN: How nice of them!

[WOMEN *look at books.* THIRD WOMAN *shows* MISS MAKANYA *the dress she is sewing.*]

THIRD WOMAN: Am I doing this correctly, Miss Makanya?

[MISS MAKANYA *goes over to help her.*]

FIRST WOMAN: My husband was delighted with the dinner I cooked last evening. He said the vegetables he ate in the city never tasted as well as the ones we had last night.

FOURTH WOMAN: Since we have been learning to cook so many different things my husband and sons are very happy too.

SEVENTH WOMAN: My little son is having so much fun learning how to read. I do not have to worry about his getting into any mischief now.

FIFTH WOMAN: I hope none of you will forget to come to the social tonight. Miss Makanya told me she has some new games for us.

ALL TOGETHER: We'll be there.

EIGHTH WOMAN: [*To* MISS MAKANYA.] Since you came to help us, Miss Makanya, we have been so very happy. [*They turn to leave.*]

MISS MAKANYA: It makes me very happy to be able to help you.

[MISS MAKANYA *exit rear right with several of the women, others disperse through various exits.*]

ANGEL: [*Thoughtfully.*] After all, I am not really *the* Angel-who-attends-to-things; not the only one! The more I have been seeing of Miss Makanya the more I have been sure that she, too, is the Angel-who-attends-to-things, she and people like her, and people who help her, and all people who follow God's leading in their hearts. [*Exit, lost in thought.*]

XIII

WILLIAM TYNDALE

The structure of a play is very important, these pupils learned.

SERVICE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Nine-thirty O'Clock

The service this morning is under the leadership of Miss B——'s class of third-year Intermediate girls. The members of this class have been studying how the Bible came to be, and the history of some of the Bible translations. To share with the Boys' and Girls' congregation their appreciation of the cost in human devotion which made the present-day use of the Bible possible, they have written the play about William Tyndale which they present today.

Prelude: Canzona, *Dickinson.*
Processional Hymn: No. 219. How Firm a Foundation
Call to Worship
Invocation
Recital from Memory: Psalm 27—Psalter page 11.
Hymn: No. 121. O Word of God Incarnate
Offertory: Thy Word Is Like a Garden, Lord—*Fink.*

Thy Word is like a garden, Lord,
With flowers bright and fair;
And every one who seeks may pluck
A lovely cluster there.
Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine;
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in its mighty depths
For every searcher there.

Thy Word is like a starry host;
A thousand rays of light
Are seen to guide the traveller
And make his pathway bright.
O, may I love thy precious Word,
May I explore the mine,
May I its fragrant flowers glean,
May light upon me shine.
Amen.

Dedication of Offering.
William Tyndale: A play.
Scene 1—A room in England
Scene 2—The same, a few weeks later
Scene 3—A print shop in Germany
Scene 4—In Germany, a year later
Prayer
Recessional Hymn: No. 303. Rise Up, O Men of God!
Benediction and Organ "Amen."
Postlude: Toccata, *Merulo.*

THE "worship committee" of the Intermediate Council was having a meeting—had been discussing and deciding which class of third-year Intermediates was to have the privilege of providing ushers for the worship service during the coming month, and whether or not any younger classes were to have the right to usher. "Let's have only third-year people. It's nice to have something to wait for while you are younger!" was the agreement.

A new member of the committee wanted to know if her class might lead the worship service soon. She had not been commissioned to ask, she said, but it had just struck her that her group had not had that opportunity for a year or more.

The Council's committee did not decide upon that, the department leader explained. As the worship service program had so much to do with the work going on in all the classes, it was a matter the committee could not have in hand adequately. Therefore it was decided between the teachers and the leader. But a class was always granted the opportunity to lead a service when they had done some thorough piece of work and wished to share their learning. Sometimes they had to wait a while for their turn if other classes had been granted certain dates.

"Your class has done fine work studying how the Bible came to be. Your teacher told me that last Sun-

day you studied the story of Tyndale. Tyndale's life story would make a wonderful play, should your teacher and the girls care to take time to produce one, but there are many other things your class could do to share some of the things you have learned," the leader said.

(It may be explained that this group of fifteen year old girls had come from the communicants' class several months before, asking their teacher to tell them more about "how the Bible came to be." In the class in which they were preparing for church membership the minister had aroused their interest in the subject—there had not been time to answer all the questions which had come to their minds. They had learned something about the matter when they were Juniors but memory was obviously very dim. With the help of Streibert's *Youth and the Bible,* Trattner's *Unravelling the Book of Books,* various books on "How We Got Our Bible," the teacher had guided the girls in finding answers to their questions. After some study of the original writers, their motives and purposes, they had come to the history of Bible translation.)

On the following Sunday the teacher brought to class reproductions[23] in color of Violet Oakley's murals in the Harrisburg Capitol building, depicting the life of William Tyndale. There are four panels: "William Tyndale Printing His Translation of the Bible into English at Cologne, A.D., 1525," "Smuggling the New Testament into England, 1526," "The Burning of the

Books at Oxford, 1526," and "Lord, Open the King of England's Eyes" (Tyndale at the stake).

"His life was dramatic, all right," commented the young council representative. "Miss A. said it would make a wonderful play."

"Yes," said the teacher, "she told me of your discussion in the committee last Sunday. We have never written and produced a play in this class, but I wonder if that is not a good reason for taking this opportunity to see what we can do."

The girls said, "Yes, let's do make a play out of the Tyndale story! If we could have costumes like those in the pictures it would be lovely, too!"

"You must make up your minds," warned the teacher, "that it will mean quite a little work! We can't possibly begin writing a play about Tyndale with only the background for it that these two lessons gave us these two Sundays. It would not be honest with our audience and with ourselves. We can't begin our writing until we have read all we can find about him and his times!"

"We'll go to the public library this week and get some books," offered several of the girls. "And on our way out today we will stop at the church school teachers' library here in the church house and see what we can find about 'The English Bible' and 'How We Got Our Bible' and about Bible translations," suggested the teacher.

For fully a month, while regular class work went on the girls circulated among themselves the books containing material about Tyndale which their teacher and they had found in various libraries, besides reading what the encyclopedias had to say under the heading of "Tyndale." When the teacher's check-up showed that the material, at best somewhat meager in information about their subject, had been read by the ten members of the class, a meeting at the teacher's home on a Saturday afternoon brought all the girls and their ideas and information together. Every girl was provided with paper and pencil.

"Now, how shall we begin?" asked the teacher. "Would we get more ideas to start with if we did not talk about our own at first, but have each one put down a list of the happenings in Tyndale's life which she thinks important for the play?" Some of the girls knew just what they wanted included, several of the less alert ones had few ideas until the discussion afterward stirred their memories, one or two could "not think what to put down."

All told there was a much longer list of occurrences than could possibly be used in a short play. "We can't have many scenes, and the play may not be long," said the girls. "I've noticed," commented one, "that when they have plays in worship service, there are usually only three or four scenes."

"Let us think what happenings are the most impor-

tant," suggested the teacher. "Perhaps those would be the ones to play and then we might decide which ones could be merely mentioned in conversation, so that the audience would know about them as a background for the action."

There was much comparing of notes and animated talk, making and re-making of lists. Finally all agreed they wanted a scene showing the bishop as he refuses Tyndale a room to work in, a scene where the German printshop is invaded, and another in England again, "where the bishop cheats." All the girls thought those happenings were "very dramatic." The five most interested girls became a committee to make a rough draft of these scenes. "And be sure you put into the conversation all the other things we talked about," the rest enjoined them as the five went into a huddle and the others got busy over the refreshments.

When the "playwrighting party" was over and the girls were going home, the teacher said, "We are all willing to use our heads and to work hard, but I'm wondering, since we are all inexperienced in the writing of plays, whether we may be overlooking something that is important. Drama is a great art. No one with good sense would try to write a symphony without knowing the principles of musical composition. Miss A. often helps the classes so that plays get into such form that the audience feels what the playwrights and players want to tell."

"Let's ask her to a reading of our scenes," said one of the girls. "But let's do our own best first," begged one of the committee of writers. "Several of us are going to work at this at my house tonight and make the conversation better."

The next day the teacher and the girls came to the department leader before class to report on their play and to draft her for attendance in their classroom. "Don't come till the second half of the hour, though," they said. "We want to work at it till then."

The work the group had done was found to be most commendable from several aspects, but it was quite lacking in dramatic power. "The language you use is ever so good," said the department leader. "How did you get your conversation to sound so 'Old English'?" "Miss B. made us read so much about Tyndale," they said, with a teasing look at their teacher, "that we had a sort of feeling how they talked then. We tried to make all the conversation match, have it all sound so."

"What do you want your audience to get from the play?" was the next question. "We want to tell about Tyndale!" they said. "But what about Tyndale do you want to tell?" "Different things," they said, "whatever we thought was very interesting." "We thought the cheating bishop was very interesting," said one of them, "so we had the last scene about him."

"That is the difficulty with your play. It tells many different things, that are interesting to be sure, but in

the end one wonders, 'Well, what of it?' The audience would feel like saying, 'Why do the girls go to so much trouble to tell us that?' A play must have what is spoken of as 'emotional power,' it must make the audience really care, feel deeply, about something. Surely they should understand why you care, who are producing it. What makes you care in the first place to write a play about Tyndale? Why do you yourselves think he is worth writing about?"

"Because he stuck to it, the Bible translation. No matter what he had to go through, and though he died for it, he wanted the common people to have the Bible."

"Is that your central idea?" Yes, they all believed that was the central thought. "But your first scene and your last one are both about the bishop!" "That's because we wanted to show what difficulties Tyndale had to overcome!"

"That was the right idea, only you did not use it to the best effect. You hit upon one of the elements of drama there, the 'opposing force,' the 'conflict.' A play needs to depict a person or group in conflict with some problem or else there is nothing for the audience to wonder about. In the first part you will want to help people see what the difficulty is, then make them feel the battle with that difficulty grow stronger and stronger, till the end shows what was finally done about it. Every scene must be fairly complete in itself, but it may

not try to stand alone. It must be what it is because of the next one, or the one preceding, or both, all in relation to the central character or characters. The suspense must grow until the climax."

"I see our mistake," said the teacher. "We have written *three* separate scenes. We must write *one* play, consisting of, say, three closely related scenes."

"Principle of unity!" quoted one of the girls. "We have it in school all the time—just did not know what it meant in a play. What we must do is tell about the bishop's doings from the viewpoint of how it affected Tyndale, and then we must end with how Tyndale came through, not with how the bishop acted."

"But he was burned in the end!" came objection, "and we can't have a fire in the play!" "We don't have to, silly!" said the objector's best friend. "We can end with how he stuck to his purpose—have him saying in such a way you can tell he really means it, that he'd be willing to die rather than give up his plan."

"You will probably want an epilogue," said the department leader. "Playwrights avoid them when possible, but in this play it could not be objectionable to end with one, since it is a short play and you may need it to do what Ann has in mind—let the audience know that Tyndale really did die for his cause. If the play is as effective as I know you can make it, the audience will have a real interest in Tyndale and will want to know what happened."

"We have the idea, haven't we, girls?" asked the teacher.

"We have," said the girls, and to demonstrate that fact one impulsive one tore their manuscript in two and threw it into the wastebasket—only to have it rescued quickly by several who reminded, "We put a lot of time on that conversation. It isn't bad, at least in spots. No use wasting it!"

There were several meetings at the teacher's home that week before teacher and playwrighting committee were satisfied with results. The cast was chosen in part from the writers' group and in part from the others. Several of the more quiet girls were chosen, because, the teacher suggested, they had not had many opportunities to do things, several others because, the girls said, they "would do it well" and were greatly interested.

Tyndale and his scholar friend were costumed in "Oxford robes" fashioned out of black choir robes by tucking up hem and sleeves. They wore black berets and long black hose with colored doublets of bright colors, after the Oakley pictures. The merchant wore a plumed hat and long silken coat cut cavalier fashion, patterned from a sixteenth-century merchant picture found after some research in the library. The German printer's distinguishing mark was a large printer's apron and a brown shirt with rolled-up sleeves. Oxford robes, long coat, printer's apron, all

were worn quite convincingly as men's raiment but did not seem to make girl players in the parts incongruous (as modern men's raiment would do, in a chancel play, and therefore be inappropriate).

The attention given by the audience gave playwrights and players some justification for the conviction that the play now had really gained the "emotional power" they had come to detect in it when they had learned to handle "suspense," "rising action," "climax."

WILLIAM TYNDALE, A PLAY

PROLOGUE

The Bible which we have today did not come of itself, but through many centuries of planning and studying. It was not written all at once but a little at a time by many different people in several different languages and preserved through the centuries until finally it was assembled in our Bible of today. In the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church was the church of Christendom. At that time the only Bibles were in the church. The church at this time felt that the Bible should not be read by the people, but read to them by the priests in Latin. The church did this because it believed that if people were permitted to read for themselves they would form wrong opinions and differ from the church.

Many people were becoming dissatisfied with some of the practices of the church, and this period was known as the Reformation. The church felt so strongly that such criticism was not right that it often imprisoned and put to death men and women who insisted on going against its

will. Although the church had forbidden any one to translate the Bible into the language of the people, several attempts had been made.

In Germany Martin Luther had translated the Bible into the language of the people and the newly invented printing press had helped to make it possible for many to get copies.

The man who in England made the greatest contribution to this cause was William Tyndale. Although he had great respect for the church, he also believed it needed reform, and the church was against his work because it thought of him as an heretic.

Our class has written a play about William Tyndale which we will now present. The first two scenes take place in England, the next two in Germany. The characters are William Tyndale, a scholar friend of his, a merchant friend, a German printer, and a messenger.

SCENE I

A Room in England

[TYNDALE *and* MERCHANT *friend enter rear left. As they come to center front the* SCHOLAR *friend appears from front right.*]

SCHOLAR: Why cannot you hold your tongue, Tyndale? Why do you anger these great officials so?

TYNDALE: But they are so wrong, my friend. Why should not the people have the word of God for themselves in their own language?

MERCHANT: But are not our priests capable of giving us the Scriptures? Can they not interpret for us the will of God?

TYNDALE: But is it not often the Pope's will rather than God's will which they give us? I have seen the Testament that Erasmus has printed from the original Greek, and I tell you, friends, the Vulgate which our church uses now is wrong in many places. Think what this new invention in Germany of the printing press can mean! With it Bibles can be made so quickly and so cheaply that every man may have one.

SCHOLAR: I have seen how it is impossible for people to understand the Scriptures except that they be given it in their mother tongue.

TYNDALE: If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that drives the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than now a priest does! Have you not heard how Martin Luther has given the people of Germany a Bible in their own language?

MERCHANT: Dangerous talk that, Tyndale! Where would you stay and how would you live while you worked on a translation in English?

TYNDALE: I will go to the Bishop of London and ask him to house me! Even now will I go! Farewell. [*Off front right.*]

SCHOLAR: [*To merchant.*] I have not faith the bishop will help him.

MERCHANT: [*As they turn to leave.*] It is well he has courage to ask him.

[*Both exit back left.*]

SCENE II

[SCHOLAR *and* MERCHANT *enter rear right,* TYNDALE *almost immediately afterward from rear left.*]

SCHOLAR: What success, Tyndale?

TYNDALE: I have been everywhere trying to find some place where I can stay while I work on my English translation. Every one has turned me down, even our Lord Bishop of London. In truth, I perceive in all England there is no longer a place for me.

MERCHANT: It is just as we told you it would be. You will never be able to do anything so dangerous as to translate the Holy Bible.

TYNDALE: I am determined. I am not going to give up. Somewhere I will find a place where I may work.

SCHOLAR: It will be very dangerous but we will help you if we can.

MERCHANT: I have a boat leaving to cross the Channel at high tide tomorrow morning which will reach Germany some time next week. You can go on the boat if you wish and mayhap in Germany you will find friends who will help you.

TYNDALE: Thank you, my friend. Since there is no place for me in England, I believe that it is best that I try another country. I can send the books back secretly when they are finished. Your offer is very kind and I will be ready to leave on your boat tomorrow morning. Till then, farewell! [*Exit front right.*]

MERCHANT AND SCHOLAR: Farewell! [*Exit rear left.*]

SCENE III

A Printshop in Germany

TYNDALE: [*Enters rear right, drops heavy manuscript on table.*] Here is my manuscript. At last it is ready for printing!

PRINTER: [*Who has entered, a moment before* TYNDALE, *rear left.*] This must indeed be a happy day in your

life. We here in Germany are happy with you. I am so glad I may be your printer! After so many months of hard work to know that the New Testament translation into English has been finished and is in the hands of the printers. You must be tired.

TYNDALE: I am tired and happy, but I will not be satisfied until I know that the books are finished and safe in England. Although we have taken every precaution to act in secret we can not know when some one may have learned of our work.

MERCHANT: I hope now you will be able to take a good rest.

TYNDALE: There will be no rest for me until I have translated the entire Bible. As soon as I know the New Testament is in England, I will begin on the Old. [*To* MESSENGER *running in from rear left.*] What is it, friend?

MESSENGER: [*Breathlessly.*] Quick, Sir! An order is out to confiscate your translation.

TYNDALE: Are they coming here?

MESSENGER: No, not yet. It will take them a little while to organize.

PRINTER: Come! Quick! We will find another place to work in.

[*All exit hastily rear left.*]

SCENE IV

[TYNDALE *and* PRINTER *have entered rear right,* MERCHANT *enters rear left.*]

TYNDALE: My good friend! How good it is to see you! What news do you bring from England?

MERCHANT: The people are buying your books as fast as we can get them over. They are overjoyed to have them

so cheap that every one is able to buy one. But the Bishop of London is taking away all he can find and burning them at Paul's Cross!

TYNDALE: That is bad, but no more than I looked forward to. They shall do no more if they burn me also, if it be God's will that it should be so.

MERCHANT: Be of good cheer, I bring you help. I have found a good purchaser for your books.

TYNDALE: Who is he?

MERCHANT: My Lord Bishop of London.

TYNDALE: What do you mean? He will but buy them to burn them.

PRINTER: Our nice books burned!

MERCHANT: Well, what of that? The Bishop will burn them any how and it is best that you should have the money to enable you to print others instead.

TYNDALE: I am glad that these two benefits shall come. I shall get the money to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out against the burning of God's word, and the overplus of money that shall remain with me shall allow me to newly print the New Testament over again, and I trust that the second will be much better than the first. To that I stake my life. [*Exit left.*]

MERCHANT: Farewell. [*Looking after him, to* PRINTER.] He may yet give his life, but his work will not be lost.

PRINTER: That it will not, surely. [*Both exit front right.*]

EPILOGUE

And so in spite of persecutions, William Tyndale gave the English Bible to his people. Although he was successful in this, he never saw England again; he was arrested,

and taken to prison where he remained in captivity for a year and a half, and at the Emperor's decree he was condemned to die. He was led to the scaffold where he was strangled and then burned. His dying words were:

"My pains therein taken, my poverty, my exile out of mine own natural country, and bitter absence from my friends; my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherewith I am everywhere encompassed, and finally other hard and sharp fighting, I endured by reason that I hoped with my labors to do honor to God, and true service to my Prince, and pleasure to his Commons."

After many years, when there was freedom of belief in England, an English translation was ordered by a King of England. This translation is known now as the King James version and will always remain a masterpiece of English literature.

Today we take the Bible as a matter of course, and any one may have a copy for the asking. Yet it was only through many sacrifices that the Bible has been given to us.

XIV

"NO FEELINGS HURT"

An enterprise frankly co-operative between class, teacher and department leader.

When the Bible passes off as history such impossible stories as that one of Samson killing 30,000 people with the jawbone of an ass, how can any one tell whether there is anything at all in it he may believe, a group of fourteen and fifteen year old boys asked their teacher. Their exaggeration was bigger than the Bible's, the teacher teased them, for the Bible writer had been content to leave the number of the dead at only 1,000. Still, the teacher conceded, it was quite a whopper of a story, but the question was, he said, what was the author's purpose in writing it, and how did it come to be written?

By the time that question was answered the boys had done at least a little philosophizing about most of the questions which concern the theologians, and were busily consulting the Bible to find the answers. In discovering the uniqueness of the Bible record as that of a people's search for and progressive finding of God,

the boys came to ask, how did people learn to know about God, and who is He really, and how does one please Him, and what is sin? Jesus' teaching, "The Kingdom is within you," eventually engaged them for some time. Finally they studied and discussed how it came about that Jesus died on the cross and why love such as he taught and lived must inevitably lead to a "cross" and to suffering. The teacher said afterward, "I think some of that was over their heads, but they seemed interested."

Somewhat in passing, by way of clearing a point that had been raised, the teacher one Sunday told a story of an Armenian girl who had witnessed the killing of her brother by a Turkish soldier,[24] and in great bitterness of spirit had sworn revenge. When later, as nurse in an army hospital, she had found in her keeping the life of that soldier who was now desperately wounded, she had learned to understand him and to forgive.

On the following Sunday one of the boys who at the behest of the group had interviewed the department leader, reported that their request for permission to lead a worship service could be granted but that he had been asked to remind the class that such a project would mean hard and concentrated work for they had not much time for preparation since the church school year was fast drawing to a close. The teacher had thought of several possible ways in which the class

might share some of the year's learnings in a worship service, and the class considered them in turn.

"Let's give a play!" urged several of the boys. But—"A play about what?" "That story about the soldier and the nurse we had last Sunday!" some one suggested. "Sure, that would be great!"

The teacher said he thought the story had possibilities. Did they want to ask one of the girls to play the part of the nurse? "No, let's fix up the story so we boys can play it, so our class can do everything. We could have a doctor instead of a nurse forgive somebody who'd killed some one he cared about."

Several of the boys undertook to think seriously on the problem during the week and bring results to class on the following Sunday. They knew they had not much time, they said, but once they had the play written they would work fast at getting it ready.

On their way out of church school they called to the department leader: "We're going to give a play! A dramatic one! There's going to be a killing in it!"

The department leader had visions of the melodramatic results these enthusiasts might concoct, and knew from experience how fond they might become of impractical plans. She therefore dropped a note to the teacher, who was avowedly inexperienced in the production of plays, quoted the boys' report, and called to mind the fact that inexperienced actors could not give

themselves a much harder problem than to kill or to die convincingly, that in a chancel play, where there are no curtains and the exits must be virtually a part of the play, a body only amateurishly dead, carried off stage amateurishly, would easily turn a worship play into a farce.

The teacher was thankful for the hint, said he would pass it on to the boys before anything crystallized and he knew they would understand.

On the following Sunday several of the boys appeared minus the promised scripts, but one of them presented a complete four-scene play, "without any killing in it, but very dramatic" the boys thought, after the teacher had read it to them. They were very proud of the playwright. Their chief criticism was the length of the play—it would take more than the allotted time. The teacher helped them eliminate the third scene, as the one least necessary to the development of the story, but they considered the play still too long and were baffled about next steps. So they said, "Let's ask Miss A. to fix it up!"

On Monday after school there was a knock at the department leader's door, and two boys, with quite a little pride and more breathlessness, handed in a manuscript: "Here's our play. It's all finished except it's too long. Rudolph wrote it and we changed it some to make it shorter but it's still too long. Will you please

make it the right length? Whatever you think will be O.K. with us!" And off they were to a ball game.

The play was a very interesting document:

SCENE I

PLACE: (A small attic room in the outskirts of the town of J. In the room are two people. One is lying in bed and appears very ill. The other is a young man very worried. There is a knock on the door. In walks a doctor.

DOCTOR: I came as soon as I could. There are so many calls for a charity doctor, I'm kept very busy.

MAURICE: I appreciate your coming, doctor. George is very feverish and keeps calling for his mother.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, my boy. I've done all I can to help your brother, but I'm helpless due to the lack of medical equipment. The only thing that can save him is an immediate operation performed by a specialist in Glasgow. But all this requires a large sum of money and you no doubt are penniless.

MAURICE: Yes, I am penniless. I came to J. with the hopes of restoring my brother's health. He never has been well. I manage to keep a roof over our heads. My wages are small and I dare not complain for fear my employer would notice my dissatisfaction. I seldom eat so as I may use the money for George's medicine.

DOCTOR: Why don't you ask your employer's help? He probably would advance you a sum of money.

MAURICE: That's an idea! I will ask him, but I doubt it. Although, when I tell him he can save a man's life, he may. No man would refuse to save a fellow man.

DOCTOR: I hope you are right, my boy. Now I must go to my other patients. You know where to get in touch with me!

MAURICE: Yes, Doctor, and thank you!

DOCTOR: Good-bye, and God bless you, my boy.

MAURICE: Good-bye, Doctor. (George stirs, and Maurice walks over and strokes his head, saying): Never fear, my brother, God is good and in some way I will get help.

SCENE II

TIME: (Next day.)

PLACE: (Mr. Dundee, the employer's, office. Maurice comes in before his employer so as to make a good impression and also to approach him on the subject discussed the night before.)

MR. DUNDEE: It's about time you came in early!

MAURICE: (Very meeky). Yes, Mr. Dundee.

MR. DUNDEE: Well, get busy and don't stare at me. Check over the account books and give me the figures.

(Maurice walks over to his desk and starts to work. He nervously fusses around, looks up, and speaks):

MAURICE: Mr. Dundee, I'd like to ask you a question. It concerns my brother.

MR. DUNDEE: Well, well, what is it?

MAURICE: Mr. Dundee, my brother is very ill. Last night I was advised by the doctor that my brother would have to have an operation performed by a specialist in order to restore his health. Would you—could you—I thought maybe you would lend me $1,000? I would work so hard to pay you back; oh, please, Mr. Dundee, there is no one whom I may go to——

MR. DUNDEE: What! Why, you brazen upstart, you! Get out of my office! You're fired!

MAURICE: All right, Mr. Dundee. I'll get out, but I'll not forget that you have the power to help, yet you refuse. You have money in the bank. Enough to make me a loan to help my brother and yet you refuse. You would not miss that money. But remember this, I'll spend the rest of my life to revenge myself upon you for your greediness!

(Maurice walks out.)

The third scene, discarded by the class, because of length they said, was a conversion scene. It depicted

Maurice going to the priest and confessing his revengeful feelings. The priest enjoins him to go to church regularly. Maurice obeys and under its teachings eventually decides he must obey Jesus' behest to "love your enemies." The playwright, it should be explained, was the son of a Catholic father. When the teacher had asked him "Do you mean Maurice went to the *minister?"* he said, "No—yes—well, it's all the same. It doesn't make any difference."

SCENE IV

TIME: (Ten years later. Maurice through the aid of the father has obtained a job and made himself a success in life. He often goes out on charity cases for he never forgot what happened to his brother. This one particular day he goes to the outskirts of a town. He comes to a little hovel and knocks on the door. A weak voice calls out "Come in!" Maurice goes in and sees a ragged, unkempt old man lying on the cot. He is coughing and is very sick. Maurice goes to him and feels his forehead. He goes over to his basket and gets out a bottle of medicine. He lifts the old man's head off the pillow and gives the medicine to him. After that the man looks better. Maurice talks):

MAURICE: Well, old man, do you feel better now?

OLD MAN: Yes, my boy, thank you.

MAURICE: Have you been sick long?

OLD MAN: For several weeks.

MAURICE: What did you do before you came to this?

OLD MAN: I had a business but I was so mean and grasping, people stopped their trade with me.

(Maurice looks at the old man very closely; slowly amazement spreads over his face, he exclaims):

MAURICE: Mr. Dundee!

OLD MAN: Eh? How did you know my name?

MAURICE: I am the man that worked in your business ten years ago and whose brother died because your mean, small mind was ever thinking of your own self that you wouldn't lend me the money that would have saved my brother.

OLD MAN: Yes, yes, I sadly remember. I'm sorry, my boy, then I didn't understand, but now I do for I have associated with poor people in my efforts to start life anew. Now I know you will go off and leave me to suffer and die as I made your brother die.

MAURICE: No, old man, something inside my soul tells me you have suffered enough, and besides, Jesus taught me never to hate any man. When George died it was the hand of God. George was a sacrifice to teach us to build to higher standards and ideals. Now I am going to save you and the rest

of your life will be spent in doing good to others. You will be another follower of Jesus.

OLD MAN: If this person Jesus did what he did for you, I want to be one of his sheep and follow him to the end of my days.

Department leader and teacher conferred during the week, and for discussion in class on the following Sunday made a list of problems the play presented. The boys were alert and thoughtful, and with their teacher quickly found solutions for as many of the difficulties as their time permitted and for some not mentioned in the list. This is the list which the teacher presented with solutions suggested by the class:

1. It won't be very practical to move patients sick in bed on and off the stage in two different scenes when there is no curtain. And is it well to have such similar settings in two out of three scenes? Is the presence of the sick boy in the first scene necessary?

(They would change the first scene to the doctor's office, the boys decided, and would use a wheel chair in the last. It would be fun to have an orderly to wheel it in.)

2. The dialogue in the last scene shows Maurice a doctor. He was a grown young man and an office worker in the first scene.

(The conversation in the first scene, the boys decided, must show that Maurice is trying to save money for a medical education. Then his being a doctor some years later will be plausible.)

3. Is it plausible that a doctor would have to let a patient

die just because the patient had no money for an expensive specialist and is not $1,000 a great deal to ask and have a right to expect?

("In some sections of the country you don't get treatment unless you pay for it," was one comment. "But the doctors in this church give you free treatment even if you can't afford it" was the experience of more than one. The problem was solved by having the doctor in the play insist on change of climate "and that *does* cost money!" $500 was to be the sum requested.)

4. Can something be done so that Maurice's forgiving spirit shows itself in action and attitude, not merely in words?

("He could pat the old man on the back," and hope he gets well soon. "Maybe he could give the old man a present.")

A committee of boys agreed to come to the church house on Wednesday to write the new version. It was decided that the play had to be ready for rehearsal the next week at all events.

The casting presented no problem. Several of the adolescent voices in the class were in the process of changing a number were still in treble clef, but one had definitely attained to manly timbre. "Charles has a good bass voice," one of the boys most interested in the success of the play observed. "He's *got* to be the old man because he can make his voice sound broken, and then too, he'll know how to sound hard-boiled in that second scene," and all the rest agreed. A boy in

the class who had a way of speaking slowly and with a certain degree of dignity was chosen by common consent to be the doctor in the first scene. Two other boys, one because he had had some experience in plays, the other because he was so interested in being in the play, were agreed upon as readily for the other two parts. "Rudolph ought to have any part he likes, he got us started in all this," said the boy chosen for the part of Maurice, but the young playwright was out of the city for several weeks.

Three boys, one a member of the cast and two others, appeared on Wednesday to put the script into form. The teacher could meet with them only briefly before attending another meeting. Before leaving he reviewed with them the problems and solutions discussed on Sunday. The department leader dropped in to say that she would be glad to see to the copying of the manuscript in multiform for the cast before the next class meeting. One of the boys said, "We've got to get in some humor! A little humor, even if it's a serious play! All the most classical plays have some humor in them." There were various other ideas which had come to their minds since Sunday.

The boys were very dependable, as the pages of manuscript testified which the department leader found on her desk in the church house that evening, with the note: "We worked till 6:10 and then we had to go.

Please change anything as you think best and no feelings hurt."

The manuscript was improved markedly but the third scene was still quite faulty in its wordiness. After the manner of most amateur writers the boys had let their characters express convictions and feelings merely through talk, when in this case in perhaps an unusual degree these feelings were distorted by such expression. The climax had not changed greatly from the version of the original manuscript, and the conclusion had not been written at all, possibly because time was lacking, but probably because the boys had not been able to think of a satisfactory one. Since the climax had not been clearly envisaged, it was not properly prepared for, and therefore not really a climax. The play would not move the audience as it might.

Teacher and department leader agreed that the boys' understandings were probably much better than their technique of expression, that perhaps lack of experience in life would keep them from finding adequate modes of expression in a given imagined situation. Therefore, and because there was not time for further group work, the department leader accepted the boys' invitation to edit their manuscript and did so to the extent that seemed necessary if the play was to have sufficient power to carry its message to an audience. She mailed to each member of the committee and to the teacher, a copy of the result with the following note:

Dear Bob and Jim and Edward:

You did fine work on the play. And the light touch you added at the end of the first scene was a good idea. Since you did not have time to finish the work and there is no time for another meeting, I made some changes in your manuscript, as you invited me to do, and I am enclosing copy of the result. Will you think them over? I wonder how they will strike you. It was like this: There was no conclusion and the problem whether or not the old man should recognize the doctor was not solved, and third, you seemed to have forgotten the part agreed upon where the doctor muses about the old man while the orderly is away getting him. The awkward pause was still there. In trying to get those things you had agreed upon into the play some of the speeches leading up to them had to be changed, too.

And there was one other thing. We had not wanted the young man to sound as if he were patronizing the old man. It seemed to me there was still some of that in Maurice's talk when he told the old man what he had learned from his brother about forgiveness. When a young man merely talks about forgiving to an old man he is apt to sound a little high and mighty, even if it is not so intended. At any rate, I could not help feeling that Maurice's words sounded so, and that the audience would not be convinced Maurice was really, in his heart, in a forgiving spirit.

I did not know how to solve that problem and then I thought of doing it in the way you will see. That solved at the same time the problem you brought up of whether or not Mr. Dundee should recognize the doctor as Maurice. When you come for the hike on Sat-

urday morning, will you stop in at my office ahead of time? Then we can talk over the changes and perhaps make others, according to your thought in the meantime. I will wait about making copies for the cast until I hear from you. Don't hesitate to say if anything I have put in does not strike you just right. Of course, "no feelings hurt." See you Saturday.

The boys stopped in on Saturday expressing approval. "That was a good idea, about the flower. Mr. Dundee will have to wear one, a little one, in the second scene." "The way ours sounded before," said one of the boys, striking an attitude with his thumbs in his armholes, was "Huh, I'm a *good* guy. *You're* a *mean* old man, but I forgive you, *I'm good.*"

The play was read in the class on Sunday and approved. No further changes were suggested. Class time was spent chiefly in choosing a call to worship and the scripture lesson for the coming Sunday, and deciding which boys were to assist the minister in the worship service. After class the cast met with teacher and department leader to decide upon rehearsal times during the following week. It was difficult to agree upon a schedule. One of the boys was apprenticed to a tailor for two hours' work a day, after school, one worked three hours daily in a grocery store, a third had many duties helping his mother run a boarding house. Finally four practices, not each time the whole cast nor the whole play, were scheduled with either the one or

the other of their adult leaders in charge. The boys were highly elated when the department leader told them of the promised loan by a kind hospital superintendent of a doctor's white uniform and an orderly's striped coat for the hospital scene.

A whole hour was spent at the first rehearsal on the first scene before the doctor and the young man sounded at all like a kindly, benevolent doctor and a worried yet determined young man, not like two boys just saying words off a page. The whole play took much work before the boys realized their parts satisfactorily. The more convincing they felt themselves to be as they entered more deeply into the lives they were portraying, the more ready they became to work still harder on their parts, and eventually they played quite convincingly.

No make-up was used, and no scenery. The only properties were a small table with a bookkeeping journal on it and a chair behind it in the second scene, a wheel-chair in the last. A lounging robe of drab color was used to help Mr. Dundee become the broken old man from the charity ward. Just before the play was ready for presentation on Sunday morning, there was some scurrying for a small flower for Mr. Dundee's buttonhole, a detail that had been forgotten in the dress rehearsal. The doctor had a colorful posy of quite noticeable size pinned on the uniform, which he would don for the last scene. One of the boys of the class sat

in a front pew ready to act as the property man, needed for the second scene, one stood just outside the door at rear left, prepared to help Maurice make a quick change into his doctor clothes. In part to cover the pause and also because it seemed wise to help the audience realize the lapse of time between scenes, one boy had been coached to give a brief interlogue after the second scene, explaining the setting of the next scene.

No one could think of a title for the play. Some name must go on the program. Inspiration did not come. The minister had attended a rehearsal and commended the boys' work. "Can you tell us a name for the play?" he was asked. "Why don't you call it 'A Victory'?" "Great!" And so it went on the program.

A YOUNG MAN'S VICTORY

SCENE I

A Doctor's Office

DOCTOR: [*Has come in from rear right,* MAURICE *enters front left.*] Oh, hello, Maurice!

MAURICE: Hello, doctor. I came to ask about my brother.

DOCTOR: I'm sorry, my boy. I've done all I can to help your brother. Only a change of climate will help. Would it be possible for him to go to some sanitarium?

MAURICE: No, I am penniless. I manage to keep a roof over our heads. My wages are small and I dare not complain for fear my employer would notice my dissatisfaction. All the money I had I have spent for

George's medicine—even that which I had saved to go to medical school.

DOCTOR: Why don't you ask your employer's help? He probably would advance you a sum of money—$500 will do it, I think.

MAURICE: [*Very happily excited.*] That is an idea! I will ask him. But I doubt if he will help. [*With much doubt in voice.*] Although, when I tell him he can save a man's life, he *may.*

DOCTOR: I hope you are right, my boy.

MAURICE: [*With a grin.*] I'll be at the office early, when there's still a chance he will be in a good humor.

DOCTOR: All right, good luck, Maurice. [*Shaking hands.*]

MAURICE: Good-bye, Doctor. [MAURICE *exits rear left,* DOCTOR, *after brief pause, rear right.*]

SCENE II

[*Next day. Small table with journal upon it and chair behind it has been placed diagonally at left,* MAURICE *seats himself and picks up pencil.*]

MR. DUNDEE: [*Entering from back right.*] Huh! You're quite early this morning—trying to make a good impression?

MAURICE: [*Very confused, as he rises and walks over to* MR. DUNDEE.] Why—a—I thought——

MR. DUNDEE: [*Sternly.*] Well, get busy and don't stare at me. Check over the account books and give me the figures.

[MAURICE *walks over to his desk and starts to work. He fusses around nervously, looks up, and speaks*]:

MAURICE: Mr. Dundee, I'd like to ask you a question. It concerns my brother.

MR. DUNDEE: Well, well, what is it?

MAURICE: Mr. Dundee, my brother is very ill. Last night I was advised by the doctor that he would have to go to a sanitarium for a change of climate. Would you —could you—I thought maybe you would lend me $500? I would work hard to pay you back after I'm through medical school. Oh, *please,* Mr. Dundee, there is no one to whom I may go— And you have so much money!

MR. DUNDEE: What right have you to hold me up!

MAURICE: I don't mean to seem to hold you up, Mr. Dundee. It is only that you have means and my brother needs help so badly.

MR. DUNDEE: [*Very angry.*] What! Why, you brazen upstart, you! Get out of my office! You're fired! Everybody wants something. Can't have people in my office that always want things!

MAURICE: [*Hurt and defiant.*] What! All right, Mr. Dundee. I'll get out, but I'll not forget that you have the power to help, yet you refuse. I have never asked you for anything before. You have money in the bank. You would not miss it. But I'll never forget. [MAURICE *exits rear left,* MR. DUNDEE, *after brief pause, rear right.*]

* * * * *

INTERLOCUTOR: The next scene is in a hospital ten years later. Mr. Dundee is now an old man and Maurice is a physician.

SCENE III

[MAURICE *in doctor's white uniform, enters from rear left to center front—at almost the same time* ORDERLY *enters from rear right.*]

ORDERLY: [*Handing papers.*] Doctor, here are the reports for Ward C.

MAURICE: Thank you. Wasn't there a new patient last night whom I have not yet seen?

ORDERLY: Yes, Doctor. Mr. Dundee. He was very restless during the night. Murmured in his sleep.

MAURICE: [*Startled.*] Dundee? Did you say Dundee?

ORDERLY: Yes, Doctor. Alexander Dundee. [*With expression as if he were saying "Why not?"*]

MAURICE: [*Musing.*] Alexander Dundee! It couldn't be the same. [*Speaking to himself, not to* ORDERLY.] A patient in the charity ward! And he was so wealthy!

ORDERLY: He has been waiting to see you. I will wheel him in when you are ready.

MAURICE: Bring him now. I can see him right away.

[ORDERLY *leaves.* DOCTOR *paces back and forth, at first agitatedly, then more slowly. At last standing still at front left while he speaks his thoughts.*]

That name is not so common! Can it be the same man? Somehow I do not feel as I did when I left him last, when he discharged me after he had refused to loan me the money to save my brother's life. And I still believe he could have saved George's life. Perhaps Life has taught me something. *George* did not feel vengeful. When I swore revenge *he* said, "Mr. Dundee doesn't understand, besides, 'Vengeance is mine saith the Lord!' "—Dundee must

be changed, too. He must have suffered to be here now.

[ORDERLY *wheels in patient from rear right.* DOCTOR *shakes hands with patient. Looks at him intently.*]

Good morning, Mr. Dundee.

DUNDEE: Good morning, Doctor. [*In discouraged voice.*]

MAURICE: How did this sickness develop?

DUNDEE: [*Old age and broken health suggested in posture and halting voice.*] Nervousness first of all, Doctor. I'm a broken man now. Used to be powerful. But I was hardhearted. And when I lost my wealth I suddenly found that I had no friends, either. Now I know how it feels to be helpless. I never knew that. Thought people could help themselves if they were not lazy. Yes, yes—I know now what it means to be helpless. Could stand being helpless better if I didn't know it was my fault that I haven't any friends. Remorse, young Doctor, remorse is a deep pain!

MAURICE: [*With encouraging voice.*] There's a poem they taught me in Sunday School when I was a boy:

"When we tell our sins they are forgiven,
We triumph when we *know* we failed!" [25]

DUNDEE: [*Thoughtfully, tone somewhat brighter than before.*] That's a comfort, Doctor. That there is forgiveness.

MAURICE: [*Impulsively takes posy out of his own buttonhole and puts it into* OLD MAN'S *hands.*] There, take that. And let Jim wheel you out into the sunshine. We'll help you to be more comfortable. I'll see you later and prescribe for you.

[ORDERLY *starts to turn wheel-chair.* DUNDEE *looks at flower and at doctor thoughtfully.*]

DUNDEE: That's a nice friendly act! Seems to me [*Scans* MAURICE *as if with near-sighted eyes.*] your face is familiar! Have I seen you before?

MAURICE: [*In somewhat offhand manner, but very friendly as* ORDERLY *takes patient off.*] Perhaps! Maybe you'll remember bye and bye.

[*As if talking to himself.*] He used to like flowers—always wore one in his buttonhole! I could not tell him *now* that I knew him well, and what his connection with my life is! Perhaps another time. He feels so broken now. Queer! All my vengefulness was washed away when I saw that he had not understood George's need until he had suffered himself. I have begun to understand what it was Jesus meant when he prayed: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!" [*Exit in the attitude of deep thought.*]

The class meeting after the worship service was full of the exhilaration which comes with successful creative activity. There was much talk about the orderly's inability to get the wheel-chair in promptly because the footrest was caught, and "Mr. Dundee" was sorry he had forgotten an important line. "Some of the fellows in Mr. H.'s class said it was a good play," "It wasn't bad, that's a cinch!," and so forth, and so forth went the comments. At the teacher's suggestion the boys set up a letter of thanks to the hospital superintendent who had lent the uniforms so graciously, and then "The Young Man's Victory" went into history.

XV

S. I. K.

An inexperienced teacher makes a beginning in play production justified by results.

SIGMA IOTA KAPPA are the pretentious initials of the only Greek words these fourteen-year-old boys know, and they constitute the cherished name of their weekday club, the meaning of which is not divulged except to initiates. The chief enterprise of the club during the year had been the preparation of several consignments of materials for school and play to a group of herder boys in South Africa.

It was the turn of the S. I. K.'s to edit an issue of the "Scribble," Intermediate newspaper. The following is the leading editorial of that issue, written by the young editor quite without prompting:

EDITORIAL

WORLD FRIENDSHIP

Since the church is supporting missionaries, and clubs of the Intermediate Department send games, scrapbooks and interesting material to boys and girls in different lands, let us consider the value of such enterprises.

What is world friendship? It means peoples of different lands united in affection. When the younger generation start forming a friendship, think how it will grow by the time they are men and women.

The boys of the second year club of the Intermediate Department last year sent some games, scrapbooks and leather work to the boys of our mission in China. They received some wonderful letters in return which they value very much. This year they are sending some interesting material to Africa to a group of herder boys.

We of Sigma Iota Kappa highly commend this idea to other organizations of the Intermediate Department because we believe in its worth, and we have faith that these projects could have a great influence in bringing about world peace.

The interest in "world friendship" here manifested is very much part of the group spirit of the particular "gang." Who knows just when and where this interest arose, and how many different experiences may have contributed to its growth in the minds of the different individuals. It had become a definite and conscious element in the thought of the group through the work in the previous year of a young leader whose sincerity, imagination, and true friendship had done for the boys what experienced teaching technique without these personal qualities on the part of the teacher could not have achieved in group morale and individual growth.

This young teacher's journal account of the initial "world friendship project" of the group is herewith given in the original together with the text of the play

which was a part of that enterprise. Perhaps it will discover values and give hope to some inexperienced teachers who may be discouraged because they have not yet learned to draw from pupils the ideas, plans, interests, which they see more experienced teachers bring forth and guide into developed enterprises. A developing technique will not permit a teacher to remain satisfied, as a regular practice, with a procedure like the following, in which he himself does almost all the planning of a play to be given. However, although the little play was written by the teacher, it was quite rightly accepted by the pupils as their own, for it was created out of their own experiences. The teacher's own integrity, his respect for and understanding of the pupils, guaranteed the honesty of the expressions he imputed to them. Continuous development in interest was testimony to the reality of the experience. Subsequently much more independent work on the part of the same pupils justified the procedure in this case.

A CHINESE PROJECT

"The boys had sent some presents down to the Alpine school in Tennessee for Christmas, and when Mr. A. (the minister) suggested they might be interested in doing something similar for the boys in our Chinese school I brought up the idea in the boys' club meeting. They seemed rather enthusiastic about it and two of them went right up to see Mr. A. for suggestions as to

what could be made, etc. He gave them a few ideas and then told them to see Mrs. B. (who had visited the church's Chinese parish in Nanhsuchow) the next day after Sunday School. Some of the boys saw her before classes started and arranged a meeting with her after Sunday School was over. She suggested making some scrapbooks and gathering post cards and trinkets of one sort or another.

The next week we started working on our scrapbooks. The boys brought their own magazines and pictures, cut them out, arranged them in groups, and pasted them into the books. There was some talk for a while of cutting out comic strips, but the boys gave up the idea, partly because of a statement by Mrs. B. that Chinese humor was different from ours and partly because they thought the comics wouldn't make a very dignified scrapbook. Many pictures were cut from old *National Geographic Magazine* copies which we had secured by asking for them through the church weekly. The boys made a scrapbook on "American Sports," one on "City Life in America," "Animals" and various others which they thought might interest the boys in China.

For a while they seemed to be getting a bit tired of scrapbooks so we took a Saturday off and made some leather bookmarks. Then the following week we went back to the scrapbooks and finished them up.

About that time we started planning for a service in

Sunday School to bring to a climax all that we had done. The fellows met and worked out a simple order of service and asked me to get one of the Chinese fellows studying in the city to speak. The man they had in mind was unable to do it. By that time we began to think that perhaps we could work out a service in which the boys themselves would take a greater part. So for the speech we substituted a scene in which two American boys were to hand over the presents we had made to two boys dressed in Chinese costumes. It was very brief indeed.

In the meantime the boys were working on some checker-boards and checkers as additional gifts. And then the suggestion was made by Miss C. (the superintendent of the department), that we postpone the date we had set for our service and spend more time preparing for it so that whatever we did would really be worth while and the result of our own planning. I was afraid for a while that such a move might kill the whole idea, but the boys seemed so much interested in making presents that they didn't mind at all. In fact, they thought it might give them time for more presents.

Then we began to think how we might capitalize more on the idea of giving presents to the Chinese boys. I asked the boys to try to write some little play that we might enact. They came with a few stray ideas the next week but nothing definite. So the next week I tried my hand at it and worked out a little drama. I

tried to imitate their conversation as much as possible and we practiced it for two or three weeks. At first there was quite a bit of monkey-business at practices, but as the time came near when they were to give it, they began to get more and more serious about it.

I had asked them to rewrite the manuscript in their own words, but they said it was all right the way it was. But as we practiced they began to make certain changes. At the place where Mrs. B. comes in, in the second scene, I had several starting to answer her, but they decided that it would look as if some one had made a mistake, and thereafter only one fellow answered her. When Lawrence comes in with the envelope I had them all jumping up and telling him to open it and read the letter. However, after a few practices they felt that would seem a bit noisy and would make every one laugh and so spoil the play a bit, and they appointed one fellow to do the talking there. Also, in several places where I had used rather slangy expressions to make it sound as much as possible like them, they began to feel that perhaps that wouldn't sound quite right in church, and without saying anything, they used some other expressions.

The boys made an appointment to see Mrs. B. after Sunday School one day, and she agreed to take the part in the play we had planned for her. She came out to help us practice, and I think that the presence of an older person in the cast made the boys feel that the

whole thing was a bit dignified and that it did have some importance.

When we practiced the Saturday night before we gave it, the boys seemed to feel like fooling around a lot. I was a bit worried for fear that it might not go well for that reason. But when the morning came, they were very desirous that everything should go off all right. One boy forgot his speech once but the whole thing was such a part of their experience for the last couple of months that he just went ahead and said what he knew ought to be said and said it better than the manuscript.

Last week we made a box and packed the presents in it. Now the boys are trying to find out how it will be best to send it.

We have ten boys in the club. By using four of them for ushers, four in the play, one as stage manager, and one to conduct the worship service, they all had a part in it.

I forgot about the letters. They were not in the original plans. But when we built a whole worship service around our project we felt that we would have to express some ideal, some large idea in it. So we made the gifts incidental to forming a friendship between the boys of the nations. It was I who suggested the idea, but the fellows liked it a lot. Next year I think that some one should see to it that correspondence is kept up and that similar contact be established with

a mission station in some other part of the world such as Africa or India. I know that the boys would like to do that. This is the text of the play:

AN INTERMEDIATE CLUB GETS SOME NEW MEMBERS

SCENE I

[*In front of the church. One boy comes along, looks around and sees another boy coming.*]

FRANK: Hi, Larry! Where are the rest of the fellows?

LAWRENCE: They'll be here soon, I guess.

FRANK: [*As* CHINESE BOY *goes by.*] Who's that?

LAWRENCE: Oh, that's a Chinese fellow who lives over on the East Side. He's an awfully nice fellow. I wish I could get to know him better. He isn't so very different from us.

FRANK: No, I don't see why he should be. None of those fellows over there in China of our age are very much different from us. Wouldn't it be fun to go over and play with some of them for a while just to see how they do act and play?

LAWRENCE: Say, don't you think it would be fun to write to them and then have them answer us? What do you say we see Mrs. B. and find out to whom we could write?

FRANK: Great idea. And just to show them that we really want to be friends, maybe we could make some presents to send them. That would sort of let them know what kind of fellows we are.

LAWRENCE: This ought to be a lot of fun. Let's see if we can find the rest of the fellows, and then we'll go see Mrs. B. Come on, let's go.

SCENE II

PLACE: *Church House Lobby*
TIME: *Several months later*

[FRANK *comes in carrying a large wooden box full of presents.* LAWRENCE *comes from the other side.*]

FRANK: Well, I think everything is here now. All we have to do is to nail up this box well so that it will stand the long trip, and then we can send it. I have all the letters that the fellows wrote here too.

LAWRENCE: I'll go see if I can find a hammer and some nails. [*Starts to leave, but meets* MRS. B. *coming in.*]

MRS. B.: Hello, Lawrence and Frank. What is all the excitement about?

FRANK: You remember we came to you a couple of months ago and asked you for the addresses of some Chinese boys so that we could write to them, and we asked you to suggest some presents that we could make and send them so that they would know we really wanted to be friendly?

MRS. B.: Yes, I remember. I thought it was such a fine idea. Did you write to them and send them some presents?

LAWRENCE: We have our letters all written, and we have a box of presents made to send them too. Do you want to see them? We were just going to nail them up.

[*They look at the presents and the boys explain them to* MRS. B.]

MRS. B.: That certainly is a fine idea. That will make China and America just that much more friendly toward each other. I hope you'll let me see the letter you get back from them! [*Turns to go.*]

FRANK: We'll do that, Mrs. B. Come on, Larry. Let's get this nailed up. [*They carry out the box.*]

SCENE III

PLACE: *As before*
TIME: *Several months later*

[*Several boys are loafing around.* LAWRENCE *comes running in with a letter in his hand, and all gather around him.*]

LAWRENCE: Hey, fellows! We have our letter from China. They just gave it to me in the church office.

FRANK: Open it and tell us what it says!

[LAWRENCE *opens letter and then looks disappointed.*]

ALL: What's the matter?

LAWRENCE: It's in Chinese. [*All show disappointment.*]

ERNEST: Say, I have an idea. Wait a minute. I'll get Chang Liu. [*He dashes out, the other boys study letter and shake heads over it.* ERNEST *returns shortly with the* CHINESE BOY.] Chang Liu will read the letter for us!

LAWRENCE: Will you, Chang?

CHANG: Yes, I will be glad to help my friends. [*He translates the letter of thanks, at the end of which the boys in China express the wish that they might belong to a club like theirs.*]

ERNEST: That was a good letter. We'll have to get busy and answer it, and we'll have Chang help us write it so

that the fellows over there will be able to read it themselves. But if those fellows would like to belong to a club like ours, why don't we elect them as members of our club?

FRANK: Say, that's a good idea! Then we'll all be in a sort of world club, won't we?

LAWRENCE: That will be something like the church then, won't it? And then if some more fellows, and girls too, got to know each other here and in China and in a lot of the other countries of the world, then we could all learn to be friendly with each other. Come on, Chang, we'll go and write to the members of our club who are in China. [LAWRENCE *puts arm through* CHANG'S. *All exit.*]

There was no suggestion of "fooling" in the worship service as conducted by the boys and the play was presented with dignity and conviction. The boys asked the following year how they might extend their "world club" and were told of Miss Makanya's school for herder boys in South Africa.[21] The group was greatly interested and attended in a body an evening meeting in the church in which a guest speaker recently returned from a visit to Natal told of Miss Makanya's work. They asked many questions about the herder boys' school and remained afterward to become more fully informed about the needs and desires of these boys who are such slaves to their people's love for and need of cattle. Much time was spent in this year in making scrapbooks, gathering reading material, for

these herder boys. As reported in Chapter XIX, money was sent for a soccer ball, desired by the herder boys. When the S. I. K.'s graduated to the Senior Department and were absorbed into the larger Senior weekday club, they asked, quite of their own initiative, that the larger group permit them to keep and assume with them some responsibility for the herder boys. In order that the older boys might the more readily share their interest, they prepared a program about the life of African herder boys, showing with a reflectoscope the snapshots and postcards sent from Africa which they had collected. Their proudest possessions in this collection were several snapshots of the young Africans at play with the soccer ball which was the S. I. K.'s gift. The Senior boys were duly impressed and voted they would let the new graduates keep on being interested and interesting others in the African "club members."

XVI

TUNING FORKS, PEW RENTS . . .

Pupils discover adventure in the history of their church.

THE teacher had been telling his class of twelve to thirteen year old boys how the Christian Church began. It was a good story, they said. But—how did *their* church, *this* church, *our* church begin? That would be still more interesting to know. The teacher was himself new in the church, but upon inquiry he learned that one of the older members was just then engaged in writing such a history. A committee of boys waited on the historian and came back with more information of interest to them than even the more eager of the boys had anticipated.

"We ought to have a program, a play in worship service, or something, to tell the other kids about it. My father says he's been in this church for years and he didn't know nearly everything we found out."

"There is so much. We can't put it all into play."

"It would be hard to make a play out of it," agreed the teacher, "but your idea about playing the story is good, just the same. Perhaps we could have just an episode or two. You know what I mean, one

happening at a time. Not put into a connected play everything we have to tell. The episode about abolishing pew rents could be played, for instance, and later the one about the building of the church house."

"It would be fun, though, to tell about the people who thought it was wicked to buy an organ."

"Maybe we could just *tell* about some of the things and *play* some of them!"

That plan was accepted. The teacher set the pupils to recall the story of the pew rents as reported by the committee, to imagine just how it came about that pew rents were given up. How did people feel who could not afford the rents? The historian had said that the minister of the church had long had the matter on his heart. When the minister had done all he could to help the people think the matter through—could *he* abolish the rents? No, the session, the church board, vote about such things.

Eventually the scene was written to reflect in the conversation of two fathers and in a meeting of the church board that episode which had indeed represented a turning point in the history of the church, a time when the people from an adjoining poorer section of the city had been truly welcomed in large numbers into a congregation once composed chiefly of the economically comfortable.

The "church house episode" was developed in similar fashion and the other selections from the history

of the church which the boys considered most interesting or important were written in narrative form. When the manuscript was ready it was found, although the class was large, that there was a part for every boy, what with the "fathers" and "church board members," the "minister," the "boys," the "church house donor," the narrator.

Except the "church board members," whose parts were very brief, those who would be in the "plays" would have to be boys who could and would come to three weekday practices before the presentation in the worship service, their teacher told them. Any boys who had too many other engagements had better take the parts in that one scene, which would need rehearsal only twice, but surely twice. All boys would have to know their lines at the first rehearsal. The biggest boy in the class was chosen the minister by common consent, "because he has a good voice and he seems more like a minister because he looks more grown up."

All the parts must be played well, the boys said. Just because the parts were short, nobody might lie down on the job. The plays were short and the audience would have to understand every word!

Yes, agreed the teacher, and the "plays" had so many exits and entrances, he said, so much crossing of the stage, so many different boys doing seemingly similar things, they would have to be very sure of their comings and goings. While any play must be done with

precision and real understanding, this demanded it in a special way.

Almost all had memorized their parts for the first rehearsal, and they were commended for their faithfulness although that bright fact was found to have its shadowy side. The boys had been so busy memorizing that they had forgotten the words had meaning. They spoke their lines letter-perfect, but that was all that could be said. The "fathers" and the "minister," the irate and amenable "church board members," the boys on the way to play, all sounded alike, like parrots, the leader told them, and not at all as if they were having real conversation.

Paraphrasing the content into their own words before going back to the dialogue of the play was necessary. They had to be helped to imagine what a father really felt like whose neighbor's boy had been run over by a taxi, what men were feeling who wished they might walk into church with dignity, expecting a seat instead of waiting for later comers who had paid more into the church treasury, how an angry man sounded, and the minister who had "been thinking a great deal about the matter," and the man who wanted to do good with his money.

Learning to be some one else was an experience new to most of them, and a contagion of giggles possessed the group for a time, after the manner of young boys (as well as girls!). But presently they began to realize

their parts, and once they began to feel the difference between really being some one else and merely imitating his words, they enjoyed their work thoroughly. The stated number of rehearsals was held and the boys were ready for the presentation in the worship service on Sunday.

When on Sunday the department leader arrived early and came into a supposedly empty church auditorium, she found a number of the "fathers," "boys" and "church board members," the "church house donor," seated on the chancel steps rehearsing their cues to themselves and to each other: "And then I come from there and go this way, and after the meeting I come here," etc. The group had had good morale before, their common enterprise had given them an increased group feeling. Each boy wanted to be sure he would not do anything "to mix things up."

Several of the boys confessed to feeling "shaky," for "I never got up in front of a crowd before, you know. It might make me nervous." Their teacher could reassure them quite honestly. All of them knew their parts well, he said. If any one should find that a sentence had floated away, there would always be another boy to help quickly, not to mention himself, the teacher, ready to prompt from the front pew.

But the boys did not need prompting, and the plays moved with extraordinary precision. The simple dramatization was obviously appreciated by the audience,

perhaps largely because so many young boys were playing their brief parts so very seriously, but also because the subject matter was interesting and enjoyable to the hearers.

The following is the text of the presentation, following a brief sketch by the narrator. He told of the beginnings of the church about a hundred years ago, the choice of name and of successive locations of the place of worship. Then came the favorite story of the tuning fork, and the introduction to the dramatization:

NARRATOR: . . . The story of our church has always been one of adventure and many interesting things have taken place. About ninety years ago a member suggested that an organ be built in the church to lead the people in their singing. Many were shocked and looked upon this man as wicked, for nothing but a tuning fork had ever been used to give the people the proper pitch. But an organ was built in spite of these shocked people and since then we have had an organ in our church.

We have recalled how forty years ago our present church home was built. Not long after that Doctor A. came to be the pastor. He invited many people to the church who had not known before that they were welcome, and the church grew more than ever. Now, in those days, the pews on the lower floor, those in which you now sit, were rented by the year by the people who could afford them. Then the pews belonged to the people who had rented them. All who could not afford pew rent were forced to

sit upstairs, or wait for a seat, or were not able to get a seat at all.

Our class will now act out our ideas of how pew rents were done away with, for you all know that any one may now sit where he chooses.

[*Two men enter from rear right in attitude of conversation with each other. When they have taken several steps forward they begin their dialogue, keeping on speaking as they walk to the center front of the chancel where they stand until the* MINISTER *joins them.*]

FIRST MAN: And speaking of pew rents, my family has had a great deal of trouble lately getting seats. You see, we haven't a large enough income to pay for a pew.

SECOND MAN: It is the same with us. I joined the church with my family four years ago, and because I can't afford to rent a pew it is difficult for us to get seats.

FIRST MAN: That is our experience. We have to stand and stand, waiting, and if we want seats without waiting it is always in the back of the balcony where we have to sit.

SECOND MAN: It seems to me that God's house is for all people, whether they can afford to pay for a pew or not.

FIRST MAN: [*Looking to left front.*] Here comes our minister. He is friendly and understanding. We will ask him what he thinks of this matter. [*To* MINISTER, *who then has come up the chancel steps.*] Glad to see you, Pastor. [*They shake hands.*] Mr. Davis and I here were just talking. We are members of the church, and pay all we can for its upkeep. We need

not tell you we are much interested in it. Yet we are not always able to get seats at the services, even when we come early and there are seats vacant.

MINISTER: This thing has been on my mind for some time and I feel that something must be done about it. I am on my way to board meeting now and there the situation will be met.

SECOND MAN: I hope the matter will be decided in our favor.

MINISTER: You can be sure that I will do my best.

[*With* "Good day!" *and* "Good luck to you!" *they part in opposite directions.* MINISTER *exits rear right, the men go down chancel steps and off front left. After a brief pause the* BOARD MEMBERS *enter from left and front right, and from rear left and dispose themselves along the back and the left end of a large table at center of chancel.*]

FIRST MEMBER: This is to be an important meeting. I understand that a pressing matter is to be brought before us.

SECOND MEMBER: [*Looking to rear right.*] It is time to begin, and here is our minister.

[MINISTER *enters, takes his place at right end of table as greetings are exchanged briefly.*]

MINISTER: The meeting will come to order. The most pressing matter before this church is that of doing away with the pew rents. If this church is to be really a Christian church all people should be equally welcome, whether rich or poor.

THIRD MEMBER: Our Minister is right. If this church is to grow in numbers and in Christian spirit we cannot longer sell seats according to the members' abil-

ity to pay for them. I move this matter be brought to a vote, that pew rents be abolished.

FOURTH MEMBER: I second the motion.

MINISTER: The motion is made and seconded that pew rents be abolished.

FIFTH MEMBER: [*Very agitated.*] I have had my own pew for fifteen years and my father had the same pew before me. If all people are to come with equal right I will withdraw [*He pounds table.*] my membership.

SIXTH MEMBER: Let us bring the matter to a vote.

MINISTER: All in favor of this motion, that we abolish pew rents, raise the right hand.

[*All but one raise hands.*]

MINISTER: Contrary minded use the same sign. [FIFTH MEMBER *raises hand.*] It is so ordered.

FOURTH MEMBER: Now we can discuss some other matters.

[*All stay for a moment, to indicate there was not abrupt dismissal, then all make exit in the same direction from which they came. After short pause to indicate passage of time the* TWO MEN *seen at the beginning come sauntering from rear right.*]

FIRST MAN: I do not think that my family and I have ever enjoyed a service in this church as much as we did last Sunday's. We could come in like self-respecting people to be shown to a seat as soon as we came in.

SECOND MAN: We did not have to stand and wait either. We were given good seats. Now this is really a house of God, for all people equally.

[*Both off front left.*]

* * * * *

NARRATOR: Now we come to another great step in the life of our church, the building of the church house. The church house, in which many of us spend much of our time, was not always here. You will be interested to know that twenty years ago there was a barn where the church house now stands. Boys and girls came there to their clubs and to play, but it was not possible to care adequately for all those who came from our crowded neighborhood. This next scene will show how it came about that the church house was built.

[Two FATHERS enter from rear left, talking as *they come near center front, then going off front right as second finishes sentence.*]

FIRST FATHER: I wish there were some safe place where my boy could play. Only last week a boy who lives next door was run over by a taxi while playing hockey in the street. I can imagine how the parents feel!

SECOND FATHER: Yes, I am often concerned about my boy. He tells me, though, that at the church where he goes to Sunday School they have an old barn back of the church building and he goes there often. The trouble is that there is not nearly enough room for all those who come there to play.

[*They exit talking.* Two BOYS *enter, one from rear left, the other from rear right. While they greet each other a* MAN *has come quietly from front left and stands observing the boys.*]

TOM: Hello, Dick!

DICK: Hello, Tom. [*Somewhat impatiently.*] It's too bad they close up the playground at the school so early. You can't play basketball in the street. And all the big kids are chosen first when I want to play hockey!

TOM: That's right. And I wish I had a place to swim. Only time I ever get to swim is when dad takes us to the beach when he gets a day off in summer. I tell you what! Come with me to the barn at my church. There's fun there. Only it's very crowded! They've got a fine fellow there, a young man, who helps us have a good time.

DICK: All right, I'm with you! [*Both exit front right.*]

QUIET OBSERVER: [*Steps to center, thinking to himself.*] Here is a real need! Now I know the answer to the question I have been asking myself! [*With expression of joy in discovery.*] A well-equipped church house! A place where boys and girls from the crowded tenements can exercise and play in safety under fine leadership! That is what I will make possible with my money. I will go [*With attitude of determination.*] to the board of the church and offer my time and my money to tear down that barn and to build in its place a church house equipped with gymnasia, swimming-pool, class and club rooms. That is what I will do! [*Off front left, still with thoughtful mien.*]

[*After a pause* FATHERS *return talking.*]

FIRST FATHER: I don't worry about my boy being on the street after school any more, because he isn't on the street. He goes swimming and to club and gym in the church house. That was a great forward step for the church to take, building that church house!

SECOND FATHER: They tell me that the member of the church who gave most of the money and so made the building possible does not want his name known. I admire that kind of a giver. I am surely thankful

for all that the church house means to my family.

FIRST FATHER: [*As they saunter off in opposite directions.*] That's the way I feel, too!

* * * * *

NARRATOR: All of us want to do our part that our church may continue to grow in the spirit of adventure and Christian brotherhood. May we sing Hymn No. 40 "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord."

Some of the boys in the class had grown up in the church. It happened that a majority had come into the parish within a year or two. Beside the other values this group enterprise had brought them, it had helped in establishing a sentiment of loyalty to the church they had joined. The church had become their own church through this experience of identification with its history and aims.

XVII

"FOR ALL THE SAINTS"

A memorial service for a departed teacher.

SERVICE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Nine-thirty O'Clock

The service today is in memory of Miss Cora Sprague who died in January after twenty years of service as a teacher in our Church School. The class of first-year Intermediate Girls, taught by Miss Sprague during three years in the Junior Department, is in charge of the service. The first-year Junior girls, whom Miss Sprague taught during the present school year, are in charge of the offering service and are taking part in recital of the Scripture Lesson.

Prelude: Allegretto (Seventh Symphony), *Beethoven.*
Processional Hymn: No. 130.
"For All Thy Saints Who From Their Labors Rest"

Call to Worship
Hymn: No. 181.
"Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand"

Why We Shall Remember Miss Sprague
Hymn: No. 283.
"Work For the Night Is Coming"

Prayer
Scripture Lesson: Psalm 121.
Offertory: Adagietto, *Delamarter.*
Dedication of Offering
Life Enduring: A Nature Parable
Recessional Hymn: No. 129.
"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

Benediction
Postlude: Andante (Third Sonata), *Mendelssohn.*

A CHURCH school class of thirteen-year-old girls had been reflecting upon the life and person of their former teacher who had died that previous week. When it was proposed that they, whose teacher she had been in three previous years, plan a worship service in her memory, and conduct it in co-operation with that teacher's present year class of nine-year-olds, they acceded readily.

Reflection upon the qualities which gave a departed one the uniqueness those near him recognized, perhaps that is the very best sort of memorial. It was well, too, that these pupils face naturally and simply the problem of death as it affected them in the departure of a teacher they respected. They, in turn, could help the pupil congregation face that mystery, albeit somewhat indirectly. All might then be prepared in some measure to meet it when it came closer home. Reflection over memorable qualities would accentuate the memory of them in the pupils' minds. Therefore the class might well be permitted to allot a succession of Sunday class meetings to the preparation of the memorial service.

The teacher whose memory was being celebrated had been a very quiet, unassuming person, whose devotion to a task undertaken had made a definite impression. "If all of us were as faithful as Miss Sprague we would have a perfect church school," was the very spontaneous testimony of one of the girls, ratified by

the opinion of the rest. Faithfulness was tacitly accepted as the keynote for the program of the service.

The family was interviewed for favorite hymns and scripture passages. From the list the 121st Psalm was chosen as an appropriate lesson for the day and it was decided by the class that it would be a finer tribute to their teacher if they together said the psalm from memory than if some one merely read it from the Bible. Accordingly the younger class participating was invited to memorize, respectively relearn, this psalm. They were also given the privilege of conducting the offering service, a much coveted assignment, which the nine-year-olds accepted with as much seriousness as the previous commission. They practised with care so that the offering might be taken with dignity, and gave much thought to the offering benediction.

Stories were read and judged, and the nature parable by Mrs. Gatty, adapted by Miss Mendenhall,[26] "The Grub and the Dragonfly," was chosen for telling. An older, fifteen-year-old girl, experienced in story-telling, was invited to tell it. Thought was given to the letter inviting the family of the deceased to the service, to the composition of the prayer, to the "memorial address," the choice of a call to worship.

On the appointed Sunday morning pupils chosen for that service waited at the church door to receive and to seat advantageously the family of the teacher whose memory was being honored.

The relatives took their places, and the audience rose to join the young choir in the processional hymn, "For all thy saints who from their labors rest." One felt that these strains held more meaning on this occasion than the young singers could have explained if they had been asked for an exegesis of the words:

> For all the saints who from their labors rest,
> Who thee by faith before the world confessed,
> Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia!
>
> O blest communion, fellowship divine!
> We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
> Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia!

With the last Alleluia one of the members of the class appeared in the pulpit for the chosen "call to worship":

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Amen.

Then she announced:

There are three more hymns on our program today. We have chosen them because they are some of Miss Sprague's favorite hymns. At first you may think them very, very different, but you may discover, as we did, that there is something about them that is very much alike. There is much power and strength in them, and they make

you feel like marching forward. We will now sing Hymn No. 181:

> Ten thousand times ten thousand
> In sparkling raiment bright,
> The armies of the ransomed saints
> Throng up the steeps of light.

The audience knew that the departed one had carried her undaunted soul in a frail body crippled since birth, and the "strength and power and marching forward" feeling in this song of her choice, with its triumphant lines,

> Fling open wide the golden gates,
> And let the victors in!

therefore made an impression all the deeper.

The "memorial address" was very brief. Its simple sincerity kept the service in the mood of childlike naturalness which had characterized it:

We are holding this service in memory of our former teacher, Miss Cora Sprague, who died recently after teaching in our Sunday School for twenty years. Miss Sprague taught our class for three years, that is why we planned this service, in which we know all of the members of this congregation are interested because all the members of our Sunday School honor the memory of Miss Sprague. She taught us many things that we remember well, for she always told stories in an interesting fashion. Her family

told us that Miss Sprague always had her Sunday School class on her mind, and we know that is so, for she often sent us cards when we were sick and always on holidays. One of the things Miss Sprague taught us by her example was faithfulness for she was always present. If all the boys and girls of this Sunday School were as faithful as Miss Sprague we would have a perfect Sunday School. I'm sure we can understand why "Work for the Night Is Coming" was one of Miss Sprague's favorite hymns, as it is about faithfulness. We will now sing "Work for the Night Is Coming," No. 283.

Another member of the class led in prayer, the text the product of the thought of the class, somewhat echoing the memorized scripture lesson:

We thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for Thy enduring love and faithfulness. We praise Thee that Thou dost neither slumber nor sleep and that Thy goodness and mercy are with us all the days of our life. Forgive us for the times when we have been unfaithful to Thee, when we have done things we knew were wrong. We thank Thee for all people who have taught us faithfulness and especially for her whose memory we are celebrating today. We thank Thee for her good example and for all that her life meant to those who knew her.

Help us to be faithful as she was—to follow in her footsteps. So we will learn always better to follow more truly our Master Jesus. Amen.

One of the members introduced the scripture lesson and was joined shortly on the chancel steps by her

class members and by the members of the younger class, from choir stalls and chancel seats and front pews:

> When we asked Miss Sprague's family what were her favorite scripture passages, they told us that she loved the whole book of Psalms, but her favorite one was the 121st.
>
> In her memory we have learned it and her two classes will now say it as the scripture lesson for the day.

It was an effective tribute, before this pupil audience, inclined to appreciate any memorization as an accomplishment requiring much discipline.

The offering was collected quietly and efficiently. The importance of that fact to the young participants could be known only to those who understood how much thought the younger group of girls had given to every detail of that part of the memorial service.

The story was a well-known nature parable beloved of children, and valuable in spite of the limitations of analogy. It told a message of enduring life in the story of the little grub who loses his grub body to become a dragonfly spreading glorious wings in sunny air that had been quite beyond his grub imagination.

As recessional hymn "A mighty fortress," its choice a further reminder of the undaunted spirit of the departed one, closed the service.

XVIII

"HE IS RISEN"

Interpretations by artists are used to introduce pupils to the Easter message.

THE study of artists' interpretations of the meaning of Easter had been a Lenten time project for a group of boys and girls. To learn what an Easter picture might mean involved the study of historic background, and took the group into most of the passion story. Burnand's "Peter and John Hurrying to the Tomb," for instance, implied the knowledge of the story of Peter's denial, of its setting in public approval, then disapproval, of Jesus.

The enterprise involved a study of the "synoptic problem." The "Harmony of the Gospels" was an interesting discovery for the pupils. To learn, with its guidance, how differently the Easter story is reported in the four Gospels, and then to speculate and study with the teacher how the varying stories may have arisen during the many years between the happening and the writing, that gave evident pleasure.

One member studied Blanchard's "How One Man Changed the World"[27] and found the following ex-

cerpt from it particularly apropos to the thought of the group:

The friends of Jesus came to believe he was not dead but living again. They had laid the poor body in the tomb, but Jesus, the loving great spirit they had known, seemed to them to be alive. How did they know it? That is harder to say. Those who came to know this, the women who had been so loyal, Peter who had failed but was after all so loyal—these and others did somehow become sure that Jesus had made himself known to them. They said one to another, "He is alive."

They tried to tell how they knew it, but the thing was so great and wonderful they could not describe it. Some said one thing, others said another. Their reports did not quite agree. This always happens when people try to tell of a wonderful thing they do not altogether understand. But on one thing they did agree. One thing was sure although they might be puzzled to explain everything connected with it! Jesus was alive.

Because of that they grew brave and confident. They came together. They told his story. They were ready to die for him. Some did. All lived for him. And his story was told. The Christian religion spread.

The teacher introduced to the group a large number of pictures but found soon that only five of them held the interest after the interpretation of the pictures in an Easter program was projected. One of these five was discarded for this use upon closer study. It was

Rembrandt's "Supper at Emmaus," in which the light is so important, both in the composition and in the meaning of the picture. "We don't seem to understand that so well," said one of the boys, "let's not try to tell about it." There remained Ender's "Holy Women at the Tomb," Burnand's "Peter and John Hurrying to the Tomb," von Uhde's "Easter Morning," and Girardet's "Walk to Emmaus."

Studied, discussed, and studied again, interpretations of the pictures evolved. For the final form of each in writing, one of the pupils, with the teacher, became responsible. It happened that special choices were well distributed, and so the one who liked any particular picture best was chosen to represent the thinking of all the group about that particular artist's conception.

The pupil who was chosen to read the Scripture lesson prepared the following introductory remarks to precede the reading, echoing, it will be evident, some of the studies and discussions previously mentioned.

The Easter story is one of the loveliest stories in the Bible and one of the hardest to understand. Like the Christmas story, it is one of those stories which tell something that is bigger and grander than any perfectly *understandable* story could *possibly* tell.

It speaks of angels, and we know that angels are spoken of to describe influences people do not quite understand. People explain the Easter story in different ways. No one

knows just how it could be that one who had died could make himself known to his friends in such a way that they never again doubted his presence in their lives, but we know that *somehow that* is what Jesus did.

Easter tells of the victory of life over death, of the triumph of a great spirit over every circumstance.

One of the loveliest of the Easter stories is the one about Jesus' appearance on the walk to Emmaus. In thousands of churches all over the world it is the custom to read about the walk to Emmaus on the Sunday after Easter.

Ender's interpretation of the Easter story is traditional, rather literal, but the understanding of the pupils was not limited by his insights since they had learned to expect different aspects in the different pictures. The Arctic home of the picture became its chief point of interest. During the progress of the enterprise some moving pictures of an Arctic voyage had been shown in the church and aroused the interest of the pupils in the conditions of life there. A member of the church who had visited the town of Molde, in Norway, home of the painting, was interviewed by a representative of the group and his word about the long nights deepened understandings necessary for appreciation of the painting. One of the boys in the group was of Norwegian descent and his word about the long nights he had experienced on a visit to the family home lent further interest. That, briefly, is the history of the following interpretation, accepted by the group as the first to be used in the picture program.

"Holy Women at the Tomb" by Ender

This picture tells the Easter morning story somewhat as the Gospel of Mark tells it. You will remember that the different gospel writers tell the story differently—as people are likely to do when something has happened they do not understand.

The picture shows Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of Jesus and Salome just arrived at the tomb on Easter morning at dawn to anoint the body of Jesus, and how they found the stone rolled away from the opening and a young man in shining white robe telling them, "He is not here. He is risen!"

One reason why we were interested in this picture is the very beautiful coloring. There is so much brightness in it. The angel's robe is shining white, the women's clothes are glowing with color, the rising sun lights it up.

Another reason why we like the picture is its story. Way up near the Arctic Circle, in the fishing town of Molde in Norway, there is a small wooden church for which the artist painted this picture. We were surprised such a beautiful picture should be in such an out-of-the-way little church. And we wondered why the people and the artist chose the Easter story out of all the stories in the Bible for a picture to look at all year round, every Sunday, even at Christmas and in the summertime.

Then we studied a map and saw that this fishing town is in a territory so far north that the nights last for months. We who live in a country where the sun rises every day can hardly imagine how people rejoice over the coming of light when they have been in darkness for months at a time. To the people up there in the North the Easter pic-

ture is a reminder of the fact that light comes after darkness. We can understand that they would specially like the glowing colors and the bright light of the rising sun, and the story of a message of joy at dawn one morning long ago, "The Lord is risen!" It would give them courage to wait during the darkness and much more patience.

Several re-writings of the interpretation of Burnand's "Peter and John" were needed before all were satisfied that "all the ways that hurry shows" were rightly told. This is the interpretation which finally evolved:

"Peter and John Hurrying to the Tomb" by Burnand

When our group studied this picture we spoke of it as the "hurry picture." The more we looked at it the more we thought of it as a picture of eagerness and excitement. It is called "Peter and John Hurrying to the Tomb," and is painted by the Swiss artist Burnand. There are a number of different ways in which the artist helps us get the feeling of hurry. Peter's hair and John's are flying in the wind, they are running so fast. Notice all the slanting lines in the garments and the figures of the disciples. When artists use slanting lines, one always gets a feeling of action.

In this reproduction the clouds are not so nicely colored, but in the description of the original picture we learn that the clouds are tipped with rosy pink underneath. The sun is just rising, that is why they are made pink from below. If people run so fast at early dawn they must be anxious to get where they are going. The faces are very eager. John is eager to see his best friend—so is Peter, but for a very particular reason.

The Easter story in the Gospel of Mark tells us that Jesus told the women and Mary to tell the disciples he would see them in Galilee, but that the women, in their excitement, forgot to give the message. In Luke the story runs like this: When Jesus told Mary and the other women to tell the disciples he would see them, they *did* give the message but the disciples did not believe them and said it was idle talk. But Peter went to find out if it was true. You will remember that it was Peter who lost his courage so badly that he swore he did not know Jesus. Then he mourned and mourned to think he had denied his best friend. Now he hopes he has a chance to make it right. His anxious expression seems to say: "I hope that what the women said was not idle talk. How *can* it be true? I hope it is true!"

We know from the gospel record how later Peter learned that Jesus understood the wrong he had done and knew Peter's sorrow over it, that Peter was forgiven. Then in new joy and strength Peter became very courageous.

Von Uhde's "Easter Morning" was the third picture on the program. Does the resurrection story mean anything to children when they meet the experience of death, or if not, might it? the teacher had wondered. A pupil had died during the year, some one's father, some one else's mother. Parts of the Easter story are read at funerals. "He liveth and I live also" is the refrain. Might it mean anything to children? She learned that it might.

She told the group of a little girl she knew whose grandfather, the child's much loved companion, had

died recently. The child had been sent on a visit during the last days of his life and the time of the funeral. On her return home she was told that her grandfather had gone on a journey and would not come back. She missed him greatly, was often in frantic fear when her mother or some one else she loved went on a journey, if only on a shopping trip or a fishing expedition, lest they would not return.

The story had stirred thought. "They ought not to have told her that!" "They ought to have told her he *would* come back!" "But that isn't so! She would be bothered, it was so different, no letters and postcards and presents from him!" The group had agreed she should learn that death is "different" but did not presume to know just how she should have been taught. All seemed to take the knowledge of death for granted.

At the next meeting of the group one of the boys picked up the picture of von Uhde's "Easter Morning": *"I* know what we can do with *that* picture. You know! That little girl and her grandfather! We could tell, as if for her, you know, that it might be this girl in the picture is crying for her grandfather, and he was there all the time trying to talk to her. His spirit was by her all the time. Just as Mary was crying and Jesus was there all the time."

All of the group liked the von Uhde picture. After much discussion and revision the following evolved:

"Easter Morning" by von Uhde

We liked this picture "Easter Morning" first of all because it shows such a lovely spring garden. There are different kinds of flowers in the garden, just beginning to bloom, and the trees are in bud. The gravestone in front makes you think that perhaps the garden is really a cemetery.

Do you notice the lovely path trailing off into the distance? At first we thought the stranger had just been taking an early morning walk. When we studied the picture more, we wondered very much why the stranger was carrying a knapsack. One does not put on a knapsack just to take a morning stroll. He must have been on a long journey. It must be Jesus on the way to Galilee where he said he would meet the disciples. The young girl in the picture does not look like Mary in the Bible story. She is not dressed like girls in Jesus' country. For some reason the German artist made her look like a German girl, like the girls in his own neighborhood.

At *first* when you look at this picture you think it is the picture of the Bible story of Easter morning, but the more you study it the more you see that it is *really* the picture of what the Bible story *meant* to people.

We decided the artist is saying: Mary thought when Jesus died he had gone very very far away, and that she would never know his presence again. That is why she is so sad. But he is really right beside her and she does not know it. He is trying to tell her "I am here," but she is so sad that she does not notice it. And the artist means to say: That is how it is when some one dies right here in our own home country. (That is why he dressed Mary as a

German girl beside the grave of a friend.) When your friend has died you think you will never see him again but he is living somehow, only you do not know it yet. You must have faith to believe it is so.

Girardet's painting was interpreted by a boy from a crowded tenement who said he liked it "because it shows such lovely green country" and "because Jesus' spirit is hovering over the friends all the time and they don't know it yet." (The same boy it was who had discovered that von Uhde might have painted his picture of "Easter Morning" for a little girl of our own day.):

"The Walk to Emmaus" by Girardet

When we studied these Easter time pictures we liked this one, Girardet's "Walk to Emmaus," very much, partly because it showed such lovely country. This is the country between Jerusalem and the little town of Emmaus. It shows a road used in Jesus' day, a walk still called the "Way of the Disciples."

Do you see on the hillsides the olive and pomegranate trees? There is a stream the travellers had to cross, then shortly they came to a spring shown here in the picture. Beside this spring, the story goes, is where Jesus joined two of his friends and walked with them.

The artist is trying to tell us in this picture that they have not seen him yet but that he is there with them all the time. Cleopas and his friend are talking with each other, not noticing Jesus, a little back of them. He seems

to be hovering over them. A little later they will be sure he is there and talk with him about the things that concern them.

The last picture interpretation used in the program reflects the thinking of several fifteen-year-olds and was added to the work of the twelve and thirteen year olds for the benefit of a number of the older pupils who had recently joined the church.

It may be mentioned that without much surveillance all the interpretations and particularly the last one would have been decidedly more "preachy" than they came to be. Perhaps that was not so much because the pupils liked moralizing but because they chose the easier way. It is so very much easier to tell some one else what some piece of art, some experience has meant to us than to re-create the experience for him so that he can draw from it his own appreciations. That is, it is easier to say "This picture means thus and so," than to make the picture live in such a way that the beholder and listener can feel for himself what its meaning may be.

"Go Ye Forth" by Burnand

This picture "Go Ye Forth," is not the picture of any Bible story, but it might be. This young person with Jesus is too young to be one of the twelve disciples, but he might well be one of the many others who came to Jesus for guidance. He is a young person whom the artist intended to represent all of us, in any time of history, asking Jesus

for advice. We are all so busy growing up that we are apt to be self-centered.

Like all of us this young person has learned about the teachings of Jesus and they sounded good to him, but as yet they have not become very real in his life. They sound very good and he accepts them but he has not tested them very much himself. Now he is getting a little more serious about his life and wants to make it count for good. This young person, like us, is asking, "What may I do to help other people?"

We live in a world where just now life is being made specially hard for people of the Jewish race. Perhaps some of us, each in our own way, can do something to overcome this very narrow-minded prejudice as it shows itself in our city. It should not be that so many people are made unhappy because of differences in race or nationality or religion. All of us know some place where we can use guidance from the teachings of Jesus.

In the picture you see Jesus' hand on the boy's shoulder and his mantle about him. By this the artist means to say: "You do not need to do all this alone. You will have guidance and help as you need it whenever you honestly want to do what is right.

On the Sunday after Easter, with the aid of stereopticon slides, the five young speakers, in succession, shared the thinking and appreciation of their group with the boys' and girls' congregation by means of the foregoing speeches, as the successive pictures appeared on the screen.

After this Easter service, a class of boys told their

leader they would like to study something that "had to do with what pictures mean" and they used four different artists' conceptions to help them study the story of Jesus' temptation.[28]

XIX

"BROTHER MAN"

A dramatized review of some aspects of the year's work on the closing Sunday of the church school year.

THE following is the text of the dramatic part of a worship service program used on the closing day of one church school year. The first section called to mind various learnings of the year, the latter represented an accounting by the church school pupils for practice of some of the Christian principles they had accepted. The service gave opportunity to bring as offerings to the altar, as it were, the "social service activities" of the year (although the children did not think of them by that heavy name—the activities they reported had been part of the pleasures of the year). There was, of course, not any commendation by the leader, nor any suggestion of rivalry in the reports. Words and attitudes said in effect, quite simply, "We had pleasure in doing these things and we think we have done them in the name of our Lord. May he accept them and bless them to bring the Kingdom."

LEADER: [*In pulpit at front right of chancel.*] Religion is a great and deep experience. Because it means so much to people it is difficult to define, and there are many definitions. According to one of these definitions, religion is the deepening and broadening of friendship in the sight of God. That is not a complete definition, but suppose we accept it for the present for it does tell of an important aspect of religion. You have studied and worked and played together for these last eight months in this church school, this school of religion. I wonder if you feel you have learned anything about this sort of friendship?

[*As the* LEADER *turns eyes to chancel rear left to direct attention there, two* BIBLE STORY FIGURES *enter, one, in light blue garment and soft yellow veil, and carrying a bowl of fruit, the other in rose garment with darker blue veil, hands folded. At center front of chancel they stop.*]

MARY: Had the Lord been with us our brother would not have died.

MARTHA: But the Lord came and restored our brother to us.

[*They quietly leave chancel, front right.*]

PUPIL: [*Rises in choir at left.*] We learned of Jesus as a friend to Mary and Martha and to the disciples and all other people, too. And that he said, "Thereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one for another."

LEADER: Mary and Martha were friends, too, weren't they?

PUPIL: Yes, Mary listened, and she meditated over Jesus' teachings and understood. Martha served him the food his body needed.

LEADER: Here are four people we have seen this year before! They lived a long time even before Mary and Martha.

[DAVID *and his* THREE MIGHTY MEN *have come up chancel steps unobtrusively from front pews,* DAVID *stands at right, the three form semi-circle toward left.*[29]]

DAVID: [*Holding helmet with water.*] My brave and loyal soldiers, you have already proved your love by many deeds of bravery. But now you are more than loyal soldiers. You are my brothers. And this water—I could not drink it now. For it is no longer water, but the symbol of your love. You have risked your lives for me. I am not worthy to receive such sacrifice. But I will pour it out as a praise offering to Jehovah, our Lord.

SHAMMAH, REUBEN, NATHAN: [*As they drop each on right knee.*] As thou wilt. [NATHAN *and* REUBEN *kneel.*]

[*While* DAVID *pours the libation they remain in silence a few moments, then all four leave very quietly chancel front right.*]

LEADER: Surely you learned of friendship from David and his three mighty men. That was one of the very great stories of loyalty. Here comes some one else from the olden times!

RUTH: [*Comes from rear left, in terra cotta robe, a large sheaf of grain in her arm, stands center front, meditatively.*] I am glad this new country has a generous law, that the gleanings are left to be picked by the poor and the stranger. Naomi will be glad I found so much grain today. I have told her that wherever she goes I will go, where she stays I will stay, her

country shall be my country and her God my God. [*Exits front right.*]

LEADER: I am glad you learned of Ruth. Her story is one of the loveliest in the Old Testament. Here comes some one else who was faithful in a country not his own!

[LIVINGSTONE *and* STANLEY[30] *come up chancel steps from front pews.*]

STANLEY: Come back with me to England, Doctor Livingstone. The king and queen are waiting to honor you for all you have done in Africa. There would be triumphal cheers from all the great historical societies.—But you do not care for honor. Think then how glad your children will be to see you and think how many people you might influence in the cause of missions!

LIVINGSTONE: Others must do that work you speak of. It is my duty to stay. You have seen what the slave trade is like! You know it is not trading, it is murdering for captives to be made into slaves. People at home think I exaggerate when I describe it. These people here depend on me. I must stay to do the work I have begun!

STANLEY: If you are so determined, there is nothing more that I can say. Of course, I honor your decision. [*They shake hands,* STANLEY *exits front left,* LIVINGSTONE, *after a moment, front right.*]

LEADER: We all remember about Livingstone's friendship for Africa and how

right mightily he lived. . . .[12]
And died right mightily.

Here is a woman, Florence Nightingale, whose friendship also was not bounded by her home country. Why is she carrying a lamp?

[FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE *enters back left dressed in basque and very full skirt of blue with kerchief, apron, and ruffled cap of white. The* PUPIL *speaks of her when she is still hidden by the choir, she comes forward into chancel, stands holding lamp as if looking at a patient a while, moves forward, stands again, as following is spoken*]:

PUPIL: [*From choir, right.*] There was no profession of nursing before Florence Nightingale's day. Hospitals would not be now what they are except for her. In the Crimean War through her work the deaths of soldiers were reduced from 42 per cent of the wounded to 2 per cent. She carried her lamp from bed to bed in the war hospitals at night, to see if all was well with the patients.

[*With quick step* FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE *disappears front right.* LEADER *and* PUPIL *look after her, then* PUPIL *says*]:

PUPIL: This is a poem about her which some of us learned:

Lo! in that house of misery
A Lady with a Lamp I see
  Pass through the glimmering gloom,
  And flit from room to room.
And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
  Her shadow, as it falls
  Upon the darkening walls.
On England's annals, through the long

Hereafter of her speech and song,
  That light its rays shall cast
  From portals of the past.
A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
  A noble type of good,
  Heroic womanhood.[31]

LEADER: It is very evident you have learned of great friendships—you have studied examples of loyalty and devotion in the presence of God, to home and to friends at home as well as to people in all the world. That is very well. But have you yourselves engaged in any adventures in friendship? Have you extended your circle of friendship or made your own friendships any deeper? That is perhaps an even more important question.

[*In response* PUPILS *rise, one after the other, from various sections of the congregation in the pews.*]

YOUNGER GIRL: On Mr. Ita's last Sunday here in America the Juniors asked me to pin a rose on him for them because we all liked him so much. We feel as if his people, the Nigerians in Africa, were our friends now. I don't know whether they feel as yet that we are *their* friends, but Mr. Ita knows we are. Mr. Ita teaches Nature Study in Africa, and we shall soon send him some scrapbooks we are making about animals and plants in our country. He will use them when he teaches his pupils.

OLDER BOY: We have friends in Africa, too—the herder boys in Miss Makanya's school. We sent them a box of books and money to buy a soccer ball. We

hope to make friends with them still more as time goes on.

STAMP CLUB REPRESENTATIVE: Our stamp club has made a collection of American stamps which we have sent to Mr. Ita for the enjoyment of a club of boys he leads in Nigeria.

REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUNGER GIRLS' WEEKDAY GROUP: We made friends with a nursery school of migrant Negro children. At Christmas time we sent them presents to New Jersey because at that time their parents were busy in the oyster canneries. Now that the oyster season is over they are picking berries in Virginia. Soon we will have a box of toys ready to send there. They do not know us very well as yet, but we have been reading and studying about them quite a little and understand something about the hardships of children whose home does not stay in any one place and who do not really belong to any church or school.

REPRESENTATIVE OF OLDER GIRLS' WEEKDAY GROUP: Some of us have been very much interested in Indians. We gave a party to all the Intermediates where we had movies about Indian life. We are eager to study more about the life of the American Indian and we feel we have done something although only a very little to become friends with them. Because we thought they would enjoy movies we invited the boys and girls of the League of the Hard of Hearing to our Indian party, and that was a little adventure in friendship, too.

YOUNGER GIRL: Our club went to the Old Ladies' Home and gave a Valentine party. For a blind old lady we made some valentines she could feel. We had a very

good time, and we could see that the old ladies did, too. We made friends with them.

OLDER BOY: We made a collection of peace posters, and we loaned them to any groups in the church who were interested. It was just a little we thought we could do to help wars to stop.

YOUNGER BOY: Our class went to visit the Chinese church in our city to find out if we could do anything to help in their work and because we saw they needed money badly we asked the Council that they be given a contribution from our benevolence budget.

YOUNGER GIRL: Our club gave Mr. Mitani, our Japanese friend, a party. He helped us be better friends with the Japanese.

CHOIR REPRESENTATIVE: Several months ago this church was filled with singing boys and girls who came from many different churches and groups. There were several Negro choirs, a Russian choir, some Chinese singers, and choirs from churches of denominations different from ours. Our choir committees visited them all to invite them, and had reception committees to make them welcome when they came, and we feel we are good friends with these other singers.

YOUNGER GIRL: While we were studying Bible history in our class we learned how much we are indebted to the Hebrew people. We visited a synagogue and also some Hebrew friends of our teacher who explained the Sabbath celebration in their home to us.

OLDER GIRL: Some of the third-year Intermediate classes have studied how the Church came to be, the Christian church as a whole. We think of the Church as an adventure in friendship in the spirit of Jesus.

Quite a number of us joined the church this year, and we hope to make our church membership more and more an adventure in friendship as time goes on.

LEADER: Do you think you have learned from the people whose lives you have been studying, and possibly from each other and from the people here and now, how to be better friends in your everyday and school relationships? Some time ago I told you of some boys I met in my calling who said they did not feel at home in our Sunday School because the boys and girls were such good friends with each other that sometimes they did not notice new pupils very much.

PUPILS' COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE: We have been talking about that in the Council. We have made a plan whereby we who have been here long will undertake to be big brothers and sisters to new pupils. We will try not to think only about the boys and girls in our own gang but to be more thoughtful of the boys and girls we do not know so well.

LEADER: I have been told that since the choir festival of which we have been reminded this morning, our choir's favorite hymn has been one which they learned for that occasion. May we sing it together, a friendship hymn, "O Brother Man! Fold to thy Heart thy Brother."[32]

[*Congregation sings standing.*]

O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose lofty work was "doing good";
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace!

NOTES

[1] From the magazine *Everyland,* now out of print.

[2] Published by Bobbs-Merrill Company.

[3] Author, William Allen Knight; publisher, Pilgrim Press.

[4] P. 311, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land,* George Adam Smith. By permission of Harper & Brothers.

[5] Costuming of David and the three soldiers after various figures in Nos. 81 and 85 of Tissot's *Old Testament Series,* published by American Tissot Society, New York.

[6] Besides the Tissot Series mentioned above, the following materials were found valuable guides to the costuming of Bible characters:

Harold Copping's series of Bible pictures published by Abingdon Press, New York, and by Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

The Christchild, illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham. Doubleday, Doran.

The Gospel Story of Jesus, illustrated by William Hole. Harper & Brothers.

Costuming a Play, Elizabeth B. Grimball and Rhea Wells. Century.

[7] From *Jerusalem,* Henry Parker, G. Schirmer.

[8] Thanks for rights to reproduce this chapter are due to *The International Journal of Religious Education* in the columns of which it was first published.

[9] This play was written during a chapter of New York municipal history now closed.

[10] "The Livingstone Gallery," nine reproductions of sculpture tableaux representing the life and work of David Livingstone, the Scottish National Memorial to Livingstone in his home, Blantyre, Lanarkshire. Securable through Missionary Education Movement, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

[11] Much of the original text of this play was lost. These pages represent an approximate reproduction from memory. Sections of the dialogue are quotations from the accounts of the historic meeting between Stanley and Livingstone as found in the letters and journals of the two.

[12] From *Bees in Amber,* by John Oxenham. American Tract Society, New York. Used by permission.

[13] A junior college in Concord, North Carolina, for Negro young women.

[14] Particularly Nos. 90, 93, 95, in the Tissot *Old Testament Series.* See also Note 6.

[15] The last three stanzas of the hymn "All People Who on Earth Do Dwell" (William Keith).

[16] *The Stars in Their Courses,* by Sir James Jeans, published by The Macmillan Co.

[17] From Sara Teasdale's collection of poems, *Flame and Shadow.* Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

[18] *The Stars through Magic Casements,* by Julia Williamson. Edited by Edna M. Reindel, published by D. Appleton Co.

[19] Music by Frederick Schilling, text by Rossiter W. Raymond.

[20] With apologies to William C. Dix, the author of the hymn "As with Gladness Men of Old."

[21] An undenominational enterprise in Imbumbulu, Natal, South Africa.

[22] The name of the angel was suggested by one of the characters in several stories by Laura E. Richards.

[23] From eight successive Sunday issues of *The Philadelphia Public Ledger:* 1913, December 14, 21, 28; 1914, January 4, 11, 18, 25, February 1. The murals are reproduced, although not in color, in *The Architectural Record,* December, 1907.

[24] Quoted from Harry Emerson Fosdick's essay "Magnanimity," in Walter Russell Bowie's story of Jesus, *The Master,* Scribners.

[25] Search for the source of this stanza has been unsuccessful.

[26] To be found in *At School with the Great Teacher,* by Jeannette C. Perkins, published by the Pilgrim Press.

[27] By Ferdinand Q. Blanchard, copyright by the Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

[28] To any readers who know Albert E. Bailey's *The Gospel in Art* (Pilgrim Press) the use of that book as guide and resource in this enterprise will be very apparent.

Stereopticon slides of the five pictures used may be rented or purchased from Board of Religious Education, Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1720 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo. Small copies of the first four pictures, for class use, may be secured from the Pilgrim Press, 14 Beacon St., Boston, *Religion in Art Series.* The last picture mentioned, Burnand's *Go Ye Forth,* is securable in wall size from Rudolph Lesch, Inc., 225 Fifth Ave., New York, or for size 9x6 inches see Bailey, *Christ in Recent Art,* Scribners.

[29] See Chapter III, and Note 6.

[30] See Chapter VIII, and Note 10.

[31] From "Santa Filomena," Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

[32] Music by Shaw, words by John Greenleaf Whittier.

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